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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee.

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THE BIVOUAC;

OR,

STORIES

OF

THE PENINSULAR WAR.

BY **W. H. MAXWELL,**

AUTHOR OF

"STORIES OF WATERLOO," "WILD SPORTS OF THE WEST," &c.

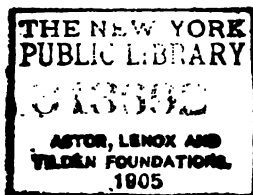
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

E. L. CAREY AND A. HART.

1837.



1905
1905
1905

TO
HIS EXCELLENCY,
CONSTANTINE HENRY EARL MULGRAVE,
LORD LIEUTENANT AND GOVERNOR GENERAL OF IRELAND,
GRAND MASTER OF THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS ORDER OF SAINT PATRICK, K. H.
P. R. S., ETC. ETC.

WITH HIS GRACIOUS PERMISSION,
THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED,

BY
AN ADMIRER OF REFINED TASTE AND LITERARY TALENTS,
THE AUTHOR

OF
"STORIES OF WATERLOO."

LONDON, JULY 10, 1837.

May 27 1905
Lister from Circ. Dept.

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THE BIVOUAC.

CHAPTER I.

THE VILLAGE—THE GIPSY—AND THE ROUT.

How often have I paused on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topp'd the neighb'ring hill.
GOLDSMITH.

"SWEET village! I must leave thee soon"—exclaimed a tall military personage, as he laid aside the newspaper, in which the immediate embarkation of reinforcements for the Peninsula was announced. "I must exchange thy quietude for fields of blood. Well—'tis for the better—a longer stay would but endanger my own happiness, and peril that of another already far too dear. Would that the parting words were spoken, and the broad sea rolled once more between us!"

He sighed heavily as he approached the window, and looked out upon the village street. It was, indeed, a peaceful and a lovely scene. The neat and snow-white cottages, trellised with jasmine and roses, peeped from the shading of the full-grown sycamores that overspread their roofs; while the pointed steeple of the church, overtopping the foliage of the trees, displayed its ancient weathercock. Under the open casement of "The Grayhound," some rustics were regaling. Further off, a small, but sparkling rivulet glided under the dark gray arch that spanned its flood, and in the distance flung its waters over a limestone ledge upon a mill-wheel, which was now revolving merrily.

But on none of these were the soldier's eyes turned. Through a vista in the trees the tall and shafted chimneys of the parsonage-house appeared, while the building, imbosomed among flowering chestnuts, was scarcely visible. There, the fixed and melancholy look of the stranger was directed, as abstractedly he thus gave utterance to his thoughts:

"Yes, Mary; we might have been happy had fate permitted it. I would have sacrificed the field of glory for the home of love. Hand in hand, we would have passed through life together; and the tranquil enjoyment of domestic felicity would have amply compensated the wild excitement that attends a martial career. Pshaw! this is dreaming; rouse thyself—here comes the harbinger of war!"

As he spoke, a light dragoon rode forward at a brisk trot, and pulling up at the door of the Grayhound, held a brief colloquy with the orderly in attendance, to whom he surrendered his bridle. The clattering of a steel scabbard on the brick pavement of the corridor, announced his approach to the chamber of the commandant; next moment he was in the presence, and delivered a sealed despatch, marked "Private."

Its contents were brief and important; an intimation that the detached companies of the —th might expect an immediate rout for Portsmouth, to join the battalions in Spain, and the peaceful village of Ashfield would be exchanged for cantonments on the Douro.

"Ay, it is what I anticipated," said the tall soldier, after he dismissed the dragoon, and gave the despatch a hurried perusal. "But a few hours more, and thou and I, Mary, will be as if we never met!" For a minute he paced the apartment in deep thought, then seizing his forage-cap and cane, issued from the Grayhound, and directed his steps to a shaded avenue leading to the churchyard, which formed the customary lounge for the idlers of the little garrison.

The arrival of a private despatch had quickly transpired, and of course occasioned some military speculation. Divers were the conjectures touching the contents of this official epistle. Major O'Connor alone could solve the mystery; and before he had taken a

and turn in the church avenue, two personages approached and joined him.

The taller, and elder of the twain, was a man remarkable for his personal advantages. His features were strikingly handsome, and regular almost to effacement; his figure slight and graceful, with an air of aimless elegance, which is rarely found but in the foremost ranks of fashion. Nothing could surpass the polish of his manner, the insinuation of his address; and a cursory observation would tell why Captain Phillips had been reputed an object of envy with one sex, and a dangerous acquaintance for the other.

His companion was a mere boy, who had scarcely numbered sixteen summers, and appeared far too young and inexperienced to encounter the vicissitudes of the dangerous profession he had selected. He had lately left a peaceful home to join the detachment at Ashfield, and full of boyish hope, little suspected the trying ordeal that was so soon awaiting him in another land. "You have had a despatch," said the handsome captain.

The major bowed his assent.

"We are all dying to know what its contents were," continued the inquirer.

"I regret it exceedingly, as I fear your curiosity must for some time remain ungratified. But do not permit suspense to prove fatal. Possibly the next post may solve the mystery."

"Then it was a private communication?"

"Strictly so, or I should have freely disclosed it," replied Major O'Connor.

"I trust that we shall not be moved," said the captain; "I am half reconciled to my present banishment, and a change of quarters might devote us to some unknown hamlet, even less endurable than Ashfield."

"I think, without breach of duty, I may relieve you from the horrors of a move," replied the commander, with a smile.

"If we do change quarters," said the young ensign, "I hope it may be for service. Summer is coming, and a campaign will be delightful. How pleasant, after a long march, to sleep on the flowery banks of a mountain

river, or beneath the rich blossoms of the orange-tree, and when the battle's ended, bivouac in a vineyard or, as captioned among rosy monks, and dark-eyed nuns!"

The elder soldier regarded his youthful comrade with a melancholy smile. "Such, then," he said, "are thy notions of campaigning! I remember when mine were as vivid, and about as accurate, as yours. Dream on, boy! A short time will show how like to reality is the picture your fancy has sketched of war."

They approached within a few paces of the churchyard, when a female unclosed the wicket that opened on the shaded avenue, and suddenly confronted them.

"It is that cursed gipsy!" exclaimed Captain Phillips, evidently annoyed at her proximity. "I hate to meet the jade. I but brushed her lightly with my cane, to free myself from her impertinence in the forest, and ever since she regards me when I pass her, as a surly mastiff scowls at a ragged beggarman."

"I am ignorant," returned the major, "of the mode by which I conciliated her favour; but my 'good-morrow' is acknowledged with a smile, and when we part I am rewarded with a hearty benison. She is a strange person after all. In the only colloquy I had the honour of holding with her on the common, from some loose hints she carelessly threw out, she seemed to possess a knowledge of private transactions that to me appeared utterly incomprehensible."

"Pshaw!" said Phillips, "They are all rogues and impostors. Were the predictions of these vagabonds examined, they would all prove rank mummery."

"Yet," said the boy, "I should like to know my fortune."

"Would you?" replied the major. "If so, now is the time. The gipsy for a few shillings will unclothe the book of fate—tell you what the stars ordain—inform you of the colour of your true love's eyes—and prognosticate the very day on which you shall be gazetted a major-general."

As he spoke they approached the woman, who had advanced a step or two to meet them. Her appearance was very remarkable. Just at the noon of life, and with

a tendency to become corpulent, her face retained its freshness, and her figure its accurate proportions. Handsome as the females of that singular community are generally reputed, Ellen—for so she named herself—must, a few years before, have been pre-eminently so. The lustrous darkness of her eyes—the marked intelligence of her countenance, united to the sweetest smile imaginable, had once made her beauty irresistible. She accosted O'Connor with kindness; carelessly addressed his young companion; then turning a searching glance at Phillips, measured him from head to foot with a look in which hatred and scorn were combined.

"Ellen," said the major, addressing her, "we would have our fortunes told. I presume that I must lead the way"—and taking some silver loosely from his pocket, he presented his offering to the gipsy.

She received the largess graciously.

"Ay," she said, "bold and generous as a soldier should be—a stout heart and open hand. But, stop: the fated hour of your fortune is not yet come—another day will rule your destiny.

"Another day! Ellen. Is the time so near?" And the soldier smiled incredulously.

"Yes; and another hour may bring with it strange and momentous tidings."

"Now, on my soul!" exclaimed Phillips, as he burst into a scornful laugh, "this is most barefaced foolery. The woman saw the dragoon ride in, and, as we all have done, concluded him the 'avant courier' of a military change, which probably, the arrival of the post will promulgate."

The gipsy answered him with a deadly glance.

"'Tis false as himself, major. All morning I have been absent from the village, and, until this moment, knew not that an express had been received." Then, turning to Captain Phillips, she continued, "You call me an impostor, and laugh my art to scorn. Will you have the future told? The past, I know you dare not listen to."

"Dare not! woman."

"Ay, dare not! Well—let that bide. Now for the future. Your hand."

Phillips hesitated. The gipsy's request was annoying, and yet he was ashamed to refuse it. He saw that O'Connor's curiosity was raised, and that his young companion was laughing at his embarrassment. With a forced effort he took a piece of money from his purse, and presented his oblation to the sibyl. She took it suspiciously, held it for a moment at a distance, and then flung it scornfully on the ground.

"I would not keep it," she exclaimed, "were it the reddest ore on which a king's image was ever stamped! Evil luck attends the gift of him predestined to evil fortune. Give me your hand, and remember what I tell you. You shall know the worst, but the knowledge shall not avert the mischief."

His companions looked on with mingled curiosity and surprise; but Phillips became pale as ashes, while the flashing eyes and heightened colour of the gipsy bespoke, on her part, an unusual excitement.

"'Tis all plain palmistry," she continued. "The lines so strongly marked that even a child might read them. Bright, but momentary success—speedy and permanent misfortune. Disappointment when hopes are highest, and the colour of the life dark, hurried, and dishonourable. Let me see the end. Mark ye that red line?" and she pointed to one far more strongly defined than those which intersected it.

"And what may that one bode?" inquired Captain Phillips, under evident agitation.

"Death!" she replied, in a low, hollow voice; "a sudden and a bloody end!"

"Well, after all," said the young subaltern, "it is but the soldier's fate."

"No!" replied the gipsy, sharply, as she suddenly caught the boy's hand in hers. "See there! That is the symbol of death upon a battle-field. Poor youth! I must not look again; I would not damp thy spirit. Alas! ere winter strips the trees, a manly breast will mourn in silence, and a mother's wail be heard for her dead boy!"

There was a pause. Phillips, with assumed indifference, broke it by inquiring, "What was the fate she predicted him?"

Casting his hand away, the gipsy looked him steadily in the face, and in a deep tone replied, "A felon's!"

"A felon's!" he shouted. "Now, by Heaven, were you not a woman, this whip should repay your impertinence."

"Then would the prophecy be the more quickly fulfilled," she replied, thrusting her hand within her cloak, and producing a short poniard. "Farewell, gentlemen. Every tittle I have told shall be accomplished. You and I, Major O'Connor, shall meet ere long." Then turning to Phillips—"Mark my words, and remember them in your parting agony. For the mischief you are doomed to work—quick, deep, and deadly, shall be the retribution."

She waved her hand, flung the wicket to, as if she wished to tear it from the hinges, turned down a cross walk leading to the forest, and was speedily out of view.

All were surprised, but Phillips for a while was speechless with rage.

"This insult," he at last exclaimed, "is not to be endured. By Heaven! I would give ten pounds to him who would drag her through a horsepond. I wonder, major, that you should patronise a foul-mouthed vagrant like yon harpy. Come, Tom." He took his companion's arm, and, piqued at the coldness of his commanding officer, turned down the avenue, leaving O'Connor to enjoy a solitary walk if he desired it.

The major's stroll, however, was quickly terminated. The winding of a horn was heard, and the postman's horse clattered over the gravelled causeway. The hour was come when the truth of a portion of the gipsy's prophecy would be tested, and O'Connor directed his steps to the domicile of Miss Burnett, who discharged the double duty of furnishing the villagers of Ashfield with the latest news and newest fashions.

The shop of a smart milliner has always been the favourite lounge of gentlemen of the sword, when abiding in country quarters; and Miss Burnett was pretty and *piquante*. She was busily engaged with a fair customer, when the mail arrived. The contents of the bag were quickly spread beside the riband-box;

and the particulars of the village correspondence might be easily collected from the passing observations of the handsome postmistress.

"One, two, three. Bless me! Only seven letters—one for the vicar, another for the apothecary, three for Major O'Connor, and two for Captain Phillips. I positively believe that wicked captain receives none but *billets-doux*. See, these are written on perfumed paper, with French mottoes on their seals. I have never remarked any coming to Major O'Connor. Is it not a strange thing, Miss Jones? But here he comes, and a noble-looking fellow he is; were I a lady, I should prefer him to Captain Phillips, handsome as he certainly is."

The object of Miss Burnett's admiration walked slowly down the street, and no wonder that he had found favour in her sight. Considerably above the middle height, O'Connor's figure combined strength with symmetry, while a firm step, assured look, and easy carriage, became one well who bore the reputation of being a stout soldier. His features were far from regular; and his face, darkened by exposure to a tropic sun, was scarred deeply by a sword-cut, which traversed half the forehead; but his teeth and eyes would have redeemed a plainer face, for both were beautiful. His voice was full-toned, and sweetly modulated, with an accent just sufficiently marked, to intimate that the Emerald Isle was the place of his nativity.

A hasty glance at the envelope of the official letter presented to him by the fair milliner, informed the gallant major that the rout was come, with an order to march for Portsmouth on the third morning. Having despatched the important packet to the acting adjutant, O'Connor proceeded to examine the remainder of his epistles; but before he had perused his first letter, Phillips and the young soldier entered Miss Burnett's shop.

"The news, major?" was the captain's hurried inquiry, as he directed a careless glance at the seals upon his billets.

"Is briefly told"—was the reply; "I have despatched the rout to the adjutant."

"Good God! Where for—and when?" and the captain's agitation was quite apparent.

"We march on Thursday—our destination Portsmouth"—returned the major calmly.

"Then we are for the Peninsula?"

"Assuredly we are," responded the commanding officer.

"How unfortunate!" ejaculated the captain,

"Unfortunate we should have been, had we been overlooked"—replied Major O'Connor.

"You and this silly boy may think so; but, 'pon my life! I have no fancy for trudging over the wide world in what old people call a marching regiment."

"Then why, my dear fellow, did you join one?"

"Simply," returned Captain Phillips, "because I had no particular desire to broil a dozen years in the east. What else would tempt any man to leave the light dragoons? I must try for an exchange. Time is short—but will you let me run up to town, and try my interest at the Horse-guards?"

"Can you be serious, Phillips? Leave a detachment under order for the Peninsula! What will the world say? Do consider well, before you take a step that must for ever compromise your honour as a soldier."

The handsome captain listened impatiently to the friendly remonstrance of his companion—his features betrayed vexation—and it was evident that there was a mental struggle which was extremely painful for the time. It was however short—as with a passionate exclamation he said, "No, no—it is utterly impossible! I would not leave England at this moment, to win a marshal's baton. Have I your leave, O'Connor?" I shall be back to-morrow evening."

The commanding officer bowed a cold affirmative; and mortified at the conduct of his companion, turned to the door, and broke the seal of a letter that still remained unopened. "Surely, it cannot be cowardice!" he muttered. "No, no; it must be madness. His reputation will be ruined for ever! By Heaven! If I know myself, there is no earthly consideration but one that could induce me to hold back from embarkation, or do the act that Phillips seems determined on!"

The *marchande de modes* and young ensign had listened in silence to the brief colloquy. Phillips, although

wounded at the major's remonstrance, which imputed much more than the words exactly conveyed, assumed that simulated indifference, with which men of the world often mask from observation feelings which they wish to conceal, and busied himself in selecting gloves from a parcel. O'Connor calmly read the first sentences of his letter, when suddenly his brow reddened—his eyes flashed—and without the customary ceremony of bidding Miss Burnett a "good morning," he started from the shop, and turned his footsteps towards the forest.

"Alas!" said the fair milliner, "I fear the dear major's letter conveyed bad news, and now that I recollect it, the seal was a black one."

"Pshaw!" replied Captain Phillips, as he curled up his lip sarcastically, "these Irish are blessed with an interminable relationship; and the fatal despatch merely announces the demise of some fiftieth cousin. Has Mary Howard been in town this morning?"

"Oh, no, poor girl! she little suspects how soon she shall lose the major and yourself," returned Miss Burnett.

"O'Connor seems touched in that quarter. Don't you think so, pretty one?" inquired the captain, carelessly.

"Yes," she replied. "Few look on Miss Howard with impunity. There are others beside the major, who may leave their hearts behind," and she looked archly at the lady-killer.

"Ah, the girl's passable. Well enough for a country beauty, certainly. Come, Tom, you must do some little matters for me in my absence, as our 'séjour' is rather limited. *Addio, mia bella*—till to-morrow, I kiss your hands."

Passing his arm through that of his youthful companion, he gracefully saluted the *marchande de modes*, and headed towards "The Grayhound," to order post-horses for the metropolis.

The pretty milliner looked after him as he walked down the village street.

"He is more than handsome," she muttered; "and yet one honest smile from that dashing major were worth all his heartless homage. I marked them both."

How differently was a summons for the field received ! One eye brightened, while the other quailed. O'Connor, one whisper of regard from thee would win my heart, even if I loved yon spiritless puppy. He that wears a soldier's uniform, and courts disgraceful inactivity, could never estimate a woman's love !"

The milliner was right.

CHAPTER II.

THE FOREST AND THE FORTUNE-TELLER.

Pacing the forest,
Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy.
SHAKESPEARE.

Down in the valley come meet me to-night,
And I'll tell you your fortune truly.
MOORE.

EDWARD O'CONNOR was an orphan from the cradle. His father was killed early in the revolutionary war, and his mother survived her husband but a twelve-month. Thrown upon the world helpless and unprotected, the infant was abandoned by every relation but a maiden aunt. She nursed him tenderly, and he grew up a stout and manly boy. In compliment to his father's memory, he was presented with an ensigncy at fifteen. Fortune smiled upon him, for his daring spirit placed him in her path. Years rolled on, and O'Connor returned to his father-land with a majority.

From the neglect of his relations, the young soldier held intercourse with none of them, save her who had proved his protector. His boyhood had passed away unnoticed, and his existence was only ascertained by his name being continued in the army-list. But when that name was honourably mentioned in the affair of Lugo; when after being wounded at Talavera and Busaco, his fortune carried him safely through the

breach of Badajoz, the leader of a forlorn hope, and his gallantry was rewarded with promotion; then did these cold-hearted relatives, who had deserted him when an infant, offer their congratulations, which he as proudly rejected. The grave covered the only one of his kindred whom he had ever loved; and when his aunt died, O'Connor endeavoured to forget that any of his lineage existed. What then must have been his astonishment, when various accidents, in six short months, removed all that stood between him and a fortune!

Such was indeed the case, and the letter he had opened in Miss Burnett's shop announced that an inheritance of two thousand pounds a year was his.

When O'Connor cleared the village, he struck into one of the numerous paths that intersected the low brushwood, with which the forest was overgrown. A fine spring evening was closing in, and the silence of the hour was only broken by the twittering of birds, and the more distant tinkle of the sheep-bells. It was a place and time fitted for a lover's meditations; and as the soldier pursued his solitary walk—no object disturbed the eye, no sound dispelled his musing—deeper and deeper he involved himself among the tangled underwood, until the baying of a dog roughly dispelled his reveries, and a light stream of curling smoke, eddying over the foliage of the copse, intimated to the wanderer, that "something living" was in his immediate vicinity.

The path had gradually narrowed until the hazel-boughs united with each other, and almost barred a further progress. Voices were more distinctly heard, and the dog's bark became louder and more impatient. O'Connor pushed the branches aside, and emerged suddenly from the thicket. A forest glade lay before him; and on its green and level sward, he discovered a group of gipsies preparing their evening meal.

A sweeter spot could not have been selected than that on which the wanderers were encamped. Belted by a close and almost impervious thicket, the gipsy bivouac was difficult of approach, while the high copse afforded it both shelter and concealment. The whole scene was wild and picturesque. Several rudely-con-

structed tents encircled a brilliant wood-fire, over which a huge camp-kettle was suspended. The party consisted of some forty; and in that number every age of human life was embraced. The old were seated on panniers in the tents—the children were sprawling round the fire—donkeys of every size were left to graze at large, while a large gaunt mastiff, whose barking had already apprised his owners of O'Connor's approach, advanced boldly to the opening of the thicket, as if determined to withstand the entrance of a stranger.

A low and peculiar whistle at once recalled the dog, and a dark and keen-looking man civilly requested the soldier to "come forward to the fire." The invitation was accepted. A girl of uncommon beauty instantly arranged a turf seat; the soldier joined the group, and found himself in the centre of the wild community, an object of curiosity to all.

"It grows duskish," said the old man. "Probably you have strayed from the forest road?"

"Indeed I have," replied the soldier, "and I must require some assistance from you, to enable me to recover my way."

"You walk late, sir," said the gipsy.

"Yes—I was wandering in the woods, and accident conducted me to your bivouac—a lovelier glade to encamp on these could not desire, 'under the greenwood tree who love to lie.' Is this your favourite retreat?"

"No—we are sometimes here; but we have other haunts as sheltered and remote as this one."

"Yours is a pleasant and a careless life," pursued the soldier.

"Ay," said the old man, "when leaves are green, and birds are singing, the copse and hedge-row are merrier than the town. Seasons will change, and boughs grow bare; and you, who have never known an unsheltered head at midnight, would then own the comfort of a roof, no matter how low the walls were which it covered."

While the old man was speaking, a female issued from one of the tents, and strode forward to the place where O'Connor was seated. The elder gipsies re-

garded her with deference, while the younger ceased their play, and scattered from before the fire, to enable her to pass them. One glance satisfied the soldier that she was known to him—and Ellen, from whom he had lately parted at the churchyard gate, now stood beside him in the gipsy bivouac.

"And has he never known a wet sward and a starry sky?" she exclaimed, in answer to the old man's observation. "Fool!" she continued, "often has the night-wind moaned over him as he lay upon the ground, where none could tell the living from the dead."

O'Connor started and looked up, while the gipsy scrutinised his features. "Yes," she continued, "all is written there—the past, the present, and the future. Speak—shall I tell of battle-fields—or turn from war to love, and name a name far dearer to your ear, than ever was the maddening cry of victory?"

"You know me then?" said the soldier.

The gipsy bowed her head slightly.

"What you told me in the churchyard avenue has happened; a strange and unexpected turn of fortune has befallen me."

"Yes; I could not be mistaken. I know the past—I see the present—and I can foretell what the future must be. Come, sir, I would speak with you apart—follow me—for I have that to say which requires a private hearing."

She lifted a billet from the fire, while O'Connor rose from the turf, and accompanied her to the extremity of the glade, where a projecting clump of copsewood concealed them from the observation of the gipsy bivouac. His dark companion took the soldier's hand, and by the flickering light of the firebrand, examined its lines attentively.

"Enough," she said. "Two hours since I told you the time had not arrived. I warned you of a sudden and unforeseen event. Has the prediction not been fulfilled?"

"It has, indeed."

She looked again at the soldier's hand: "Ay," she muttered rapidly, "The tale is clear, although the web

is tangled. Fame and wealth—danger and disappointment—all mingled in the same fortune—the career brief and glorious—the end—but let the future rest. Will you listen to the past, ere I unfold what yet lies in the womb of time?"

"If you please, Ellen," returned the soldier, struck with the imposing solemnity of the gipsy's manner, while once more he submitted his hand to her inspection.

"All is distinct and legible—the beginning and the end alike—a red cradle and a red grave—one parent weltering on a bloody field—the other filling an early tomb." She turned her sparkling eyes upon, the listener, and asked him, "was it so?"

"You are indeed right, Ellen," replied the major; "but this disclosure is no proof of second sight—my orphanage, and its attendant circumstances, are generally known."

The gipsy proceeded without noticing his observation.

"Nursed by a fair woman, the child became a boy—and the boy would be a soldier. He crossed the ocean wave—and before the dawn blackened on his cheek, heard the roar of battle beneath the burning skies of Egypt. Years passed, and the boy ripened into manhood. Again I see him on the field of death—no longer with the advancing step of victory, but struggling on a broken bridge, among the last combatants of a retreating army. The scene has changed anew—on a green hill, encircled by vineyards and cork-trees, two hosts are striving for the heights. Where is the soldier now? Bleeding on the ground, while a woman hangs over him like a mother, and recalls him back to life!"

O'Connor started—"Surely," he exclaimed "there, is no imposture here!—Tell me, I adjure you—"

"Hush!" replied the gipsy; "be patient, and listen for a minute. View but another scene, and then say, if the picture of a past life be truly painted." She made a momentary pause, and then continued—"The sun set upon a proud city, and a beleaguering host; the storm of artillery, which through the day had raged, was

ended; darkness and silence had succeeded; and, wearied with noise and blood, the contending foes had sunk to rest. Rest! Ay, such as that unearthly calm which precedes a tropic hurricane! Hush!—'Tis the measured tramp of massive columns, moving silently towards yon broken wall. They approach the breach unnoticed and unassailed; not a bugle sounds; not a musket betrays the midnight advance. Another minute of harrowing silence—and the volcano bursts! Rockets and blue lights flare across the murky sky—cannons roar—shells hiss—and cheers, and yells, and curses, add their infernal accompaniment. The forlorn hope are struggling through the ditch—a shower of death reigns round them, and the breach is choked with corpses. Again, and again, the assailants mount the ruins, mown down in hundreds by the withering fire of a hidden enemy, or empaled upon the bayonets of their comrades. Where is the soldier now?—Mark yon remote rampart which a daring band has carried by escalade! There—pressing on the retiring French; there—cheering on his desperate followers; *there*—is the soldier—while the wild cheers of his companions, rising above the hellish din of battle, proclaim the fall of Badajoz! Is the tale true?"

"*True!*" exclaimed the soldier, as his kindling eye and outstretched arm showed the excitement which the gipsy's vivid painting had aroused. "True! it is witchery—every event from childhood—my whole career displayed as in a mirror—my parents' death—the fight of Alexandria—the pass of Lugo—the plains of Talavera—the heights of Busaco—the storm of Badajoz. Woman—whence is this knowledge—how tell the story of a life, so little marked as mine?—you, to whom but a few days back, I was an utter stranger!"

"Indeed!" said the gipsy, with a smile; "I am forgotten—you are not. I have loosely sketched some passing scenes—there is one which must be more plainly pictured.—Attend to me.

"It was during the disastrous retreat from Astorga—imagine a pressing enemy—roads, almost impassable from tempestuous weather, and the multitudes that

broke up their surface—rain, and snow, and storm—no fire to warm—no roof to shelter—and say, would not these united miseries overcome the endurance of the boldest soldier? Then fancy a deserted woman, cumbered with a sickly child, and loaded with booty for which she had perilled the dangers of a battle-field, and which she now wanted resolution to abandon—what would be the chances of escape? The winter blast was howling mournfully, and the night set in—the British, harassed by a long march, were halted for the night on a bare hill-side, that afforded but little shelter from the piercing east wind. The last of the retiring soldiery had crossed a wooden bridge, which a young officer and part of the rear guard were directed to cut down, to place the flooded river between the retreating troops and their pursuers. The work of destruction was rapid—the last planks were tearing from the beam that supported them, when a wretched follower of the camp, urged on a weary and overladen mule. The French light troops were already pressing down the hill—and, in another minute, she must have been exposed to plunder, and probably some nameless insult. She reached the river bank—she called, by his own hopes of mercy, for pity from the soldier—but he laboured on. Another blow or two, and the plank would have fallen—another minute, and the enemy be up. Desperately that helpless and devoted wretch prayed in her child's name for succour. It was hopeless, and death appeared inevitable; but it was otherwise decreed. Her cry was heard, and he who commanded the party rushed back to her deliverance. He stayed the pioneer's axe, seized the bridle of the mule, goaded him with his sword across the tottering bridge, and assisted the poor wretch to follow—while the enemy were seen through the gloom. 'We shall be taken!' exclaimed the soldier, with an oath, as he flung away the hatchet. The young officer caught it up. 'Fear nothing!' he said. 'The act was mine, and on me be the consequences. Fall back, men!' They obeyed, and found shelter behind a copse, from the spattering of the French advance—all were safe except

the gallant youth who had saved the deserted woman. He stood alone, and his blows fell quick as lightning on the fragment of the woodwork. "Run," cried a soldier; "run, sir, or you are a prisoner!" But next moment, a splash in the water told that the destruction of the bridge was completed; and unhurt, the bold commander of the rear-guard effected his escape, amid the cheering of his comrades.—Is there any passage of your life that in aught resembles this scene?"

The soldier had listened with deep interest.

"Yes," he replied, "I remember a similar occurrence.—Pshaw! after all it was a trifle;—and who, for the chance of a random shot or two, would abandon a woman who had asked assistance?"

"You knew her, of course?" said the gipsy.

"No—I never saw her before, and never met her afterwards."

"Indeed!—Methinks that gratitude should have obliged that woman to have sought her deliverer.—Listen. War continued; and under another and more fortunate leader, the young soldier was again engaged. From the heights of Busaco, he viewed a sight that would almost gladden a coward's heart. It was the evening before the battle. For as the eye could range, the French divisions were extended over an expanse of country—and from every rising ground, lance-blades and bayonets were flashing. Gradually these masses were condensed—they neared the bottom of the Sierra—and when night fell, bivouacked beneath the same heights on which the English had taken their position.

"Morning came—and a lovelier never dawned than that of Busaco. The roll of cannon, the rattle of musketry, ushered it gallantly in. Smoke-wreaths obscured the base of the hill, and rolling slowly upwards, announced to its defenders, that the storm of war was coming. The broken surface of the mountain became the scene of numerous combats; but though outnumbered far, the British kept their vantage-ground, and repulsed the attempts upon their left. On the right, an accidental success led to a bloodier encounter. Covered by the smoke, the French light troops swarmed over

the face of the Sierra, and gained the summit of the ridge; while a mass of infantry, following the voltigeurs in close column, struggled up the heights, and nearly reached the table-land. This was the crisis of the day. An English brigade, couched behind the hill for shelter from the cannonade, suddenly sprang up and met them. One close and shattering volley arrested the French advance. Vainly their leaders rushed to the front, waved their schakos above their heads, and shouted "Forward!" Just then a rush was heard—a wild hurrah rose above the thunder of the cannonade. The smoke parted—and glancing in the bright sunshine, the British line were seen advancing to the charge. The French delivered a feeble volley, recoiled, wavered, broke, and ran down the hill, leaving the Sierra in the possession of the conquerors. Where was the soldier then? Extended on the ground, faint and bleeding—a woman's arm supported his drooping head—a woman's hand moistened his parched lips—and though the face of the heights was ploughed by shot and shells, she never left him for a moment, until a fatigue party of his own regiment carried him to the rear."

"Now, by Heaven!" exclaimed O'Connor passionately, "I would almost give my right hand to prove my gratitude to that female—I recollect the moment well—as we pressed forward with the bayonet a ball struck me, and I went down. I lay for some time insensible, and when I recovered a woman hung over me, holding a canteen to my lips. Never shall I forget the brilliancy of that dark eye, which was bent in pity upon mine!"

"And have you never seen that countenance save on the hill of Busaco?"

"Never!" said the soldier.

"Was she your countrywoman?" inquired the gipsy.

"Even that I cannot tell. I should say not. Her cheek was swarthy—her hair black as the raven's wing—her air and look foreign."

"Surely you have often met features that would recal her memory?"

"I may," replied the soldier; "but I did not particularly remark them."

"And would you still wish to meet that dark woman?" she inquired sharply.

"I should indeed."

"Look then on *me!* she whom you saved at Lugo is before you—and the same hand that on the mountain-ridge of Busaco held the wine-flask to your lips, now grasps yours!"

"Heavens! am I dreaming?" exclaimed the soldier. "It is the same dark eye—it is the same brown cheek!"

"Attend to me," said the gipsy: "It is now past sunset, and three hours hence the village will be quiet. When the clock strikes ten, meet me under the lime-tree in the centre of the churchyard. There we shall be safe from interruption.—Has Major O'Connor any objection to the place and hour?"

The soldier smiled.

"Death and I," he said, "are, as you know, old acquaintances; and I shall not be reckoned an intruder on his domain.—At ten, Ellen, I shall be waiting at the lime-tree."

"Enough; we part now—Rosa!"

At her summons, the pretty gipsy whom the major had already noticed, came forward.

"Conduct this gentleman into the forest, and point out the shortest path to Ashfield. Farewell! and remember that we meet again," she said, and turning away, rejoined the party at the fire.

The girl entered the thicket, and O'Connor followed her in silence. For a moment the sparkle of the blazing wood, scintillated through the openings in the coppice. Presently the light vanished—the hum of voices died away—nothing indicated the proximity of the gipsy cantonment; and apparently, the only wanderers on the forest were the soldier and his handsome guide.

CHAPTER III.

THE REJECTION.

Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead!
 Stabbed with a white wench's black eye.

SHAKESPEARE.

My hand met hers with trembling touch!
 'Twas the first time I dared so much,
 And yet she chid not.

MOORE.

For a quarter of an hour O'Connor accompanied the young gipsy through a succession of glades and thickets, which, in the gloom of evening, would have been impracticable to a stranger. To Rosa, however, the difficulties of the forest appeared familiar, and she led the way at a quick pace until the last clump of under-wood was cleared, and the sparkling lattices of the village were seen at the distance of a mile. Receiving the soldier's gratuity with a courtesy, his pretty guide bade him a good-night, entered the copse again, and left O'Connor to pursue his way in solitude.

His late interview with the strange female, whom he had so unexpectedly encountered, had left a deep impression. How any person could have been so intimately acquainted with every incident of a military life, passed chiefly in a foreign land, was unaccountable; and that that person was a woman, enhanced the mystery. At present the thing was inexplicable, and he determined to control his curiosity until the hour of meeting came. The effort was successful; and, in a short time, the gentle object that had occupied his bosom when he entered the forest, again engrossed his thoughts.

"Fate has removed the only barrier between us," he

muttered, as he hurried towards the village. "I now may choose the walk of life I please, and Mary's want of fortune presents no obstacle. Yet it is a deep sacrifice. I, who have already won a name, to quit the path of honour, and, in the very noon of manhood, sink into an inglorious obscurity—and for what?—a woman's love! Love! Am I certain that Mary Howard has a heart to give? That question must be speedily determined. I can no longer bear suspense, and endure the torment of uncertainty. This hour should end it. Should? *It shall.* The trial must be made—and on Mary's decision my future course shall hinge."

Without entering the village street, O'Connor turned into a green lane that led directly to the parsonage. The moon was just rising—and as she topped the dark foliage of the lofty chestnuts, flung a silvery light upon the white building they overhung. He paused, and leaning against a close-cut hedge, which separated the flower knot from the paddock, silently examined the dwelling of his mistress. All around bespoke an humble but happy home—all around was peaceful, calm, and tranquillising. The lofty poplars flung their lengthened shadows across the turf, while many a shrub and creeper exhaled, in the dew of evening, a fresh and grateful perfume. A glare, redder than the moonbeams, flashed from an open lattice on the green parterre. In that lighted room the lady of his love was sitting. O'Connor sprang over the enclosure—a few steps more—and Mary Howard was before him!

Concealed by a full-grown myrtle, the soldier gazed in silence on her whose fiat was presently to decide the character of his after life. She was the sole occupant of the apartment, and, unconscious that she was observed, seemed wrapped in deep and painful meditation. One glance at her intelligent eyes betrayed mental inquietude, and more than once a deep sigh escaped her. O'Connor gazed upon the beautiful girl with pleasure mingled with apprehension. A few minutes, and the secret of his heart would be confessed! He wished the essay made—the trial ended. Yet there he stood, rooted to the spot, timid and irresolute; one who had been fore-

most where all were desperate, could not now muster *hardiesse* to urge the pleadings of an honest passion; and he

Who all unmoved had led
Over the dying and the dead,

quailed before the look of love which beamed from the downcast eyes of village beauty!

A rustling noise from the leaves of the myrtle, which an involuntary movement of the soldier occasioned, seemed to dispel Mary's reverie. She turned over the leaves of an open music-book, took up a guitar that was lying on the table, and striking a few chords, sang, in a voice that thrilled through the listener's heart, a ballad that was not unknown to him.

THE HIGHLAND SOLDIER TO HIS MISTRESS.

I.

Give me this valley for my home,
The heather for my nightly pillow,
And I will ask no more to roam,
Or brave the field, or dare the billow.
Yes, love, for thee I'll all forego,
With war's red honours cloy'd and weary;
What bliss can Donald's bosom know
Like thy sweet smiles, my artless Mary.

II.

For me the bugle sounds no more,
Nor drums shall beat its loud alarm;
Again I seek my native shore,
To shield thee, love, from scaith and harm.
He who has roam'd the world as long,
Will own his wanderings sad and dreary;
For, oh! among the tinsell'd throng,
He'll find no heart like thine, sweet Mary!

Before the last sounds of the symphony had died upon the strings, O'Connor stood before the startled musician. A deep blush overspread her countenance, as with mingled feelings of pleasure and surprise, she took his hand and bade him a warm welcome. For some minutes both laboured under evident embarrass-

ment; but the major's self-possession speedily returned, and he placed himself upon the sofa beside the timid girl.

"Well, Miss Howard, is not this profession of arms a sad one? Just when friendships have been formed, and we have learned to esteem our friends, an arbitrary command removes us unceremoniously from the objects we regard. You have heard, no doubt, that we are under orders for the Peninsula!"

"Alas, yes—" she replied, while her eyes filled with tears, "but a short time since, I learned that we are to lose you in a day or two: indeed, Major O'Connor, your removal will cause deep regret to my father and myself."

"It is the fate of war," said O'Connor, with a forced smile.

"Alas!" returned the fair girl with a sigh, "what a long period may probably elapse before you revisit England."

"Ay, my dear Miss Howard, and the odds are pretty heavy, that many of us shall never return."

"It is a fearful thought;" and her pallid cheek and broken voice betrayed her feelings. "This sudden order must have surprised you, major?"

"Not particularly, Miss Howard; I have been frequently moved from quarters before now, even with slighter ceremony."

"Miss Burnet, who was lately here, mentioned that your letters appeared to be of more than ordinary interest."

The major smiled: "And did the pretty milliner observe the interest they excited?"

"She did, and feared, from your abrupt departure, that some evil tidings had been communicated."

The soldier sighed: "Alas! Miss Howard, it proves how little the expression of the countenance may be taken as a faithful index of the heart. That letter would be reckoned by most men the harbinger of joy, for it announced that one who stood between me and a fortune was gone."

"Indeed, major!"

"Such indeed was the intelligence that made me oblivious of my parting good-morrow to the pretty post-mistress."

"Thank heaven! I rejoice that our apprehensions were unfounded. When do you expect to move?" and she sighed heavily.

"In two days hence."

"And you will embark—"

"Almost immediately. The drafts of the respective regiments are already at Portsmouth; and ours, I fancy, is the last."

There was a long and embarrassing pause—the soldier broke it—"Tis late, Miss Howard; I have stolen upon you unannounced; am I an intruder?"

"Oh, no; I was so lonely when you came in. My father was obliged to visit a sick friend, and his residence being distant, it will be late before he can be home. But for your visit, major, I should have had a long and solitary evening to contend with. How much my father will regret his absence—you are such a favourite."

"Am I, indeed?"

"Indeed you are. I had an only brother. He died before I can remember the event—my father still loves to speak of him; and from some fancied similarity between you, he imagines that, had his boy lived, he would have been such another as yourself."

The soldier smiled, and Miss Howard continued—

"Pray, when is Captain Phillips expected to return?"

"You are aware, I presume, that we are about to lose him?"

"No—yes—" and she coloured slightly. "In fact, Miss Burnett told me something of it."

"I regret it on his own account. It is a rash and dangerous experiment."

"Might not circumstances, however, justify the step?" she inquired with considerable animation.

"None could, Miss Howard. Phillips has already declined the call of duty, and given up the regiment, rather than leave the kingdom. This second refusal to

go on service will lower him sadly in military estimation."

"You are not a fair judge, major, for you are a professional enthusiast." She blushed deeply. "Pardon this boldness—this impertinence—and let me question even your own wisdom, in leaving a land of peace, for scenes of violence and human suffering. Have you not made a name? Have you not already distinguished yourself? and now, when fortune unexpectedly heaps her favours on your head, why not seek and secure that tranquil happiness and quiet, which I have heard you say that, in earlier life, you so much longed after?"

While he spoke, a deeper blush overspread her cheeks, and her soft and beaming eyes fell timidly before the ardent glances of her companion.

"Miss Howard," said the soldier, "you have unconsciously touched a chord that awakens the softest—or it would probably be juster to term them the weakest—feelings of a heart not much accustomed to indulge in sentiment. It is true that, hitherto, mine has been a wild career of danger and excitement, and that a fortune more than sufficient to realise every reasonable want, or wish has suddenly devolved upon me: yet there exists but one consideration that could induce me to abandon a profession which in boyhood was the object of my pride, and in manhood the hope of my ambition.—Listen to me, Mary!"

It was the first time that name had ever passed his lips. Miss Howard was deeply affected, and O'Connor's faltering tones betrayed emotions too powerful to be concealed. He took her hand, and thus continued—

"Mary! I have been from infancy an orphan, and never known the ties of love and kindred, save for one, who now sleeps in the grave. I have been a wanderer on the world. I have had no home whereto I might turn my weary steps—no heart rejoiced for my success; and no eye would have wept for me had I fallen. What have I, then, to do with the gentler felicities of life?—I, who have never known what is conceded to the humblest peasant—the happiness of loving and being loved!"

He stopped: his hand was burning—his voice became inarticulate—while Miss Howard's tears told how much the soldier's warmth had touched her.

"Yet, Mary, it is not that I could not love—that mine has been a cold and reckless existence. There is one for whom my heart beats—there is one whose form is ever before me—one for whom even glory itself would be resigned!" He made a long pause. "Mary! canst thou not read the secret of my heart?—Mary—*thou art that one* whom I so love and idolise!"

As O'Connor proceeded, Miss Howard's flushing countenance became more deeply crimsoned. But when he named her name—when he declared her to be the object of his adoration—the roses as rapidly died away, and an unearthly paleness succeeded them.

"Oh God!" she exclaimed, "what a trial is this! Let me collect myself: my thoughts wander—my brain is burning! This is indeed so unexpected!"

He had placed his arm round her, and Mary Howard suffered it to remain.

"O'Connor," she said, faintly, "if there be on earth one whom I regard with sisterly affection, you are the man. Were I to name him with whom my happiness would be secure, it should be you. Yet, much as I admire—much as I respect you—much as I esteem a declaration of affection, of which the proudest might be vain—beyond the bond of friendship, no other tie can bind us."

The soldier by turns grew pale and red—"Mary, do I hear you right? I asked you for your heart, and—"

"Alas! I have none to give you—mine is already gone—my hand is plighted to another."

"Another?"

"Yes, O'Connor. Oh, that we had met earlier, or never met!"

"Say on, Mary."

"I cannot. Spare me till to-morrow, and not a secret of my heart shall be hidden from you."

"To-morrow, Mary?"

"Yes; but in pity leave me now. Alas! that I

should ever speak a word to pain the man whom I regard so dearly."

The soldier had sprung from the sofa, and stood with folded arms, and eyes fixed on his lost love. Miss Howard rose, and offered him her hand.

"O'Connor, will you love me as a brother?"

"As a brother, Mary?"

He gazed on her for a few moments with a melancholy look—caught her to his breast, and madly pressed her lips with his. "Mary, may you be happy, as I am wretched!" he said—rushed from the apartment, and bounding across the hedge, Mary Howard was left to weep alone.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHURCHYARD MEETING.

I cannot prate in puling strain,
 Of lady-love and beauty's chain:
 If changing cheek and scorching vein,
 Lips taught to writhe, but not complain;
 If bursting heart, and madd'ning brain,
 And daring deed, and vengeful steel,
 And all that I have felt and feel
 Betoken love—that love was mine.

THE GIAOUR.

It might seem surprising that one whose character was firm almost to sternness, should feel a rejected suit so deeply as Major O'Connor appeared to do, when he rushed wildly from the parsonage, and again turned his steps towards the outskirts of the forest. It was indeed a moment of exquisite suffering—his fairy fabric overthrown—his cherished hopes blasted in their very infancy. But a few hours since, to part from Mary Howard might have caused him inward pain, but certainly he would have exhibited his customary resolution. Every thing, *then*, prohibited him from loving. He was poor—the member of a dangerous profession—his inheritance a sword—his road to fortune perilous and doubtful. *Now* he had become wealthy, only to be wretched—and when every apparent obstacle was removed, he had to learn that the only woman he ever loved had already bestowed her affections upon another.

Had he not met Mary Howard, O'Connor would most probably have passed through life with an unscathed heart. He had been taught to consider the marriage of a soldier to be an act bordering upon insanity. A thirst for military glory rendered his adoration of the sex a light pursuit—a wayward fancy.

The bustle of active service left him no leisure to cultivate the tenderer impressions. His passion was fugitive regard, and the whole aim and object of his love,

"To sport an hour with beauty's chain,
Then throw it idly by."

But when in the tranquil solitude of Ashfield, the fair and unsophisticated girl became the frequent companion of his forest walks—when in the quiet of a happy home, the place where woman's gentler virtues are best discovered, he witnessed the artless qualities of her mind apparent in all the nameless attentions that a devoted child bestows upon a beloved parent; the soldier saw realised a being whom before his fancy had but sketched. Gradually his heart felt the softening influence of a first passion; and before he suspected danger, O'Connor's peace of mind was lost!

Yielding to the tempest of his feelings, he marked not the flight of time. Night fell—the moon poured a flood of pale light over the surrounding forest, and the chimes of the village clock smote his ear with sounds as melancholy as if they knelled the ruin of his hopes. He counted the quarters—the hour of his appointed meeting with the gipsy was near. Collecting his wandering thoughts, he hastened to the Grayhound, gave some necessary orders to his servant, wrapped a cloak about him, took his sabre in his hand, and as the last stroke of ten was beating from the tower, crossed the stile of the churchyard, and walked slowly towards the well-known rendezvous.

All around him was silent; the vibrations of the bell gradually died on the night-breeze, and the loneliness of the dwelling of the dead was disturbed by no living thing but himself. Beneath the shadow of the lime-tree a figure was indistinctly seen; it was motionless as the effigies of the departed, and until he had approached within a pace or two, the soldier doubted whether the object on which he looked was breathing clay or inanimate marble.

"You are true to your tryst," said a low and well-

remembered voice, as the gipsy glided into the moonlight.

"I fancied that I should have been first at the appointed place," was the soldier's reply.

"Anxious, no doubt, to learn your destiny from one who knows it well."

"You are wrong;" and a bitter smile passed over his face; "I have already put my fortune to the test, and for the knowledge of what remains I would not give one farthing."

"Indeed, major!"

"Ay, had there been aught to tell, our meeting should have been somewhat earlier."

"Would that it had!" returned the gipsy; "then would you have been spared the humiliation of a rejection."

"O'Connor started back as he passionately exclaimed, "Woman! how comes it that my life, past and present, is open to your view? Scarcely an hour has elapsed, and yet you tell me what occurred when, save myself, there was but another present."

"Yes, major, other eyes were looking on, for I was standing in the orchard. I saw Mary Howard in your arms; I saw you rush madly to the forest; I saw the girl sink on the floor in an agony of tears. What did all this tell? That he whose heart had beaten calmly in the battle-field, knew for the first time the withering pang of unrequited love; and she, when she refused your hand, felt an ominous conviction that, by that act, she was entailing misery on herself."

"I do not understand you; surely, if she loved another, she was right to refuse her hand, when she had no heart to accompany it."

"She was," she continued mournfully. "Alas, poor girl! she has lavished her love upon a villain—a deep and dangerous villain—and his falsehood will wring her heart. Did she name him to you?"

"No; she promised to tell me every thing to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" said the gipsy. "Have you then no suspicion who your rival is?"

"Not the most distant."

"Did you ever remark Captain Phillips in her company?"

O'Connor started as if an adder had stung him. "Ha! Phillips? Impossible!"

"How blind a lover is!" replied the gipsy. "None else could see them together five minutes and not detect the secret of her heart."

"Psha!—I repeat it—it is impossible!" the soldier passionately exclaimed. "Not three days since I heard Phillips, after dinner, speak so lightly of her, that I felt some difficulty in restraining my indignation. He talked of woman with profligate levity; swore that wealth was the only excuse for matrimony; and declared that nothing besides should ever tempt him to become a husband."

"He swore truly for once," said the gipsy.

"If so, why should he pursue Miss Howard? He would not make her a wife—he dare not dream of her as a mistress."

"*Dare not!*" exclaimed the gipsy. "What will not a libertine dare? At this moment he has marked her for destruction."

"Oh, it is too monstrous for belief!" replied the soldier. "None would be wretch enough to contemplate such villany—the destruction of that artless and confiding girl—one so innocent, so beautiful!"

"Ay! the more glorious the creature, the prouder is the boast of humbling its beauties to the dust."

O'Connor's face flushed with rage. "By heaven! if even in thought he wronged her, his blood should answer it. Hear me," he continued in a low and broken voice, "though to speak it pains me. I loved her, madly loved her, almost before I knew it; poverty placed a barrier between us, and I strove and half succeeded in forgetting. Within the last few hours, wealth became suddenly mine—I flew to Mary Howard and offered her my hand. She heard me with deep emotion, and told me she had bestowed her affections on another. You saw our parting; I swore to love her as a brother, although I little dreamed how soon she

would need protection. If then there be an earthly object I adore, she is that one—and if a villain harmed her—”

“You would no doubt avenge it,” said the gipsy.

“Avenge it!” he exclaimed, in a voice hoarse with passion, “An altar should not shield the villain!”

“Then beware of Phillips—or Mary Howard’s ruin is decreed.”

With a sudden movement that made the gipsy start, O’Connor suddenly unsheathed the sabre, he had been leaning on—the steel flashed in the moonlight, as he continued in deep and passionate tones—

“Here, in the face of heaven! here, surrounded by the dead—him who injures thee, Mary, I denounce; where he goes, my vengeance shall follow; and, were it to the verge of hell, I would pursue him, until the stain upon thy honour is washed out in his heart’s blood!” He pressed the blade to his lips, withdrew it slowly, and again replaced it in the scabbard. A long pause ensued—the soldier broke it.

“You told me, when parting in the forest, that you had something to communicate—”

“Which your precipitation has rendered of no avail. I suspected your attachment for Miss Howard, and intended to apprise you that a successful rival had already won her love.”

“It was kindly meant; but are you certain that Phillips is the person for whom I have been rejected?”

“I am,” replied the gipsy; “I saw them meet in the forest, and watched the interview; a thicket concealed me, while all that passed between them was under my observation. I heard his tale of love; all that he uttered was believed; and, in turn, she owned a mutual attachment. I saw his arms around her—I saw their lips meet—”

“Stop, stop!” exclaimed the soldier: “This is torture—but it is convincing. Would that the hour was come when I should leave thee for ever, Mary!”

“Will you, then, be ruled by me? Have I not proved that every incident in a life of varied fortune is known to me?”

"Say on," replied the soldier mournfully.

"Avoid Miss Howard—and forget her."

"Oh! that I could—and yet how contemptible this weakness. Had I but seen the meeting of which you spake, that would have wrought a cure."

"You doubt me, then?" said the gipsy.

"Oh, no! Alas! no room for doubt is left me. I know how sincerely I loved: why marvel, then, unwillingly I tear the object from my heart?"

"I have much to speak of. Will you meet me at to-morrow evening? The place—where Rosa left you."

"I shall be punctual," said the soldier.

"Farewell—your path lies there." And the gipsy pointed to the stile. "Good night!" And turning a walk that swept round an angle of the building, disappeared before he could return the salutation.

O'Connor remained for a short time in the churchyard; the chimes roused him from his musing, and hastened to the village inn. The gipsy's advice not unheeded; a powerful exertion was required, he determined to make the effort. With assumed indifference he joined the supper party, who had for some time been expecting him; and no indications of "blighted love" betrayed his recent disappointment.

The night wore on. At an early hour the major of the joyous group, and strove to sleep, and forgot the lost one; but ominous visions broke his rest, and objects of love and hate were constantly before him. While, Phillips was at his feet, and the imaginary emotion of withdrawing his sword from the body of the prostrate enemy awoke him. He dreamed again of Mary Howard. O God! that vision was recurring—and with a deep execration he sprang from bed, and flung the casement open. The first light morning had feebly broken, and the village was still but in deep repose. Gradually the soldier recovered composure—again he sought his pillow, and once more strove to forget his disappointment. This effort successful, and he slept until the drum-boy's reveille aroused the little garrison of Ashfield.

CHAPTER V.

THE RIVAL SUITORS.

"And she was lost—and yet I breathed,
 But not the breath of human life:
 A serpent round my heart was wreathed,
 And stung my every thought to strife."

THE GIAOUR.

"If thou wert honourable,
 Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue, not
 For such an end thou seek'st."

CYMBELINE.

THE morning tête-à-tête between Major O'Connor and Miss Howard was, as it may be imagined, any thing but agreeable. The soldier's firmness was often severely tasked, to enable him without emotion to hear from the woman whom he loved, a confession of attachment for another; while to her, the declaration was embarrassing in the extreme. To the relief of both, the approach of Mr. Howard through the orchard ended this painful interview. Soon after the major took his leave; and Mary retired to weep in her own apartment unobserved.

In declining O'Connor's addresses, there was a pre-sentiment on Mary's mind almost amounting to conviction, that she was then endangering her future peace, and doing an act that would cause her the bitterest regret. The noble qualities of her rejected suitor were justly appreciated; and her better judgment was assured, that in the keeping of the high-spirited soldier, a woman's happiness was safe.

Yet it would have been surprising, if one so artless as the parson's daughter had not been dazzled by the more attractive accomplishments and personal beauty of Captain Phillips. Ignorant of mankind, and educated

In the strictest seclusion, she had reached her eighteenth year and never been a dozen miles beyond her native village. Deprived at an early age of maternal protection, her undivided affections centred in her surviving parent; and though possessed of a warm heart, and ardent imagination, until lately, Mary Howard knew what love was but by name. The remoteness of her father's dwelling precluded her from seeing any of the other sex, except the homely youths who inhabited the adjacent farm-houses. To all around her, Mary was a superior being. With brilliant talents and a cultivated understanding, her natural disposition was ardent and romantic. Nevertheless she had hitherto passed through existence "fancy free"—and until, in an evil hour, some rural disturbances occasioned a detachment of the Rifles to be cantoned in the village of Ashfield, Mary had never met an object on whom she could bestow her love.

From the seclusion of the hamlet, the only persons with whom the military held intercourse were the vicar and physician. Mr. Howard was friendly and hospitable; and Mary's beauty induced the officers of the little garrison to be frequent visitors at the parsonage. From the earliest period of their acquaintance, O'Connor was taken with the sweet and artless manner of the handsome villager; while she, who "had read of battles," viewed with girlish admiration one whose name had been proudly mentioned "where all were brave;" and marvelled to find the lion-hearted soldier mild and unassuming as a school-boy. A closer intimacy must have ended in permanent attachment; but O'Connor's marriage was impracticable, and his high and chivalrous honour obliged him to repress every indication of regard, when prudence forbade him to offer her his hand. Had the slightest indication of affection been offered by the soldier, Mary Howard would have loved him devotedly. A few days more, and fortune would have removed the barrier; but, in the interim, Phillips unfortunately rejoined the detachment—and his arrival sealed the misery of two persons who otherwise might have been truly happy.

From the moment he was presented to the village beauty, Phillips marked her for destruction. Before, he had never met a being so artless and so fascinating. Her charms inflamed his passions, and her simplicity led him to expect success. Phillips was a heartless scoundrel—a selfish and cowardly wretch; and the very circumstance which would have deterred any but a villain—that Mary's only relative was a timid and helpless churchman, from whose vengeance a seducer had nothing to apprehend—confirmed him in his unholy designs upon his unsuspecting victim.

He knew his powers well—and hackneyed in those nameless arts which rarely fail to win a woman's heart, Mary was assailed with all the apparent warmth of faithful passion. To see, and hear, and not to love, was impossible. Phillips pursued his advantage with the tact of past experience—in the solitude of the forest, his perjured vows were credited—and Mary Howard, with downcast eyes and blushing cheeks, owned that he had not wooed in vain.

And who was Phillips? That question were difficult to solve—for a strange mystery was connected with his parentage. His reputed father had held a small appointment in the Treasury—and his mother was a woman of uncommon beauty, and but indifferent reputation. It was known that the treasury clerk at his death had been in embarrassed circumstances, yet his widow resided in the western suburbs of the metropolis, the mistress of a splendid house and handsome establishment. Phillips had been educated at a fashionable school, and at an early age was placed in a dragoon regiment. He lived expensively, but seemed always in easy circumstances. That he had influence at the Horse Guards was apparent, from his quick promotion to a troop, as well as the facility with which he effected changes from regiments he disliked, and the extended leaves of absence he obtained whenever it was his pleasure to require them. All this was rife with mystery—and it was generally believed that Phillips and his mother were under some powerful protection; and it was

whispered that to a noble duke the captain owed his birth, and the lady her establishment.

The day wore on heavily. The major, in the duties that devolved on him as commanding officer, had much to occupy his attention; and the detachment were busy preparing for the march. To regulate his private affairs—a task of some difficulty, occasioned by his recent acquisition of property—O'Connor sedulously applied himself. Before evening parade he had accomplished his arrangements; and, for the first time, written a testamentary document, which he confided to an old companion, with directions for its being produced, in the event of his falling in the Peninsula.

His friend had just quitted the apartment, when a chaise and four drove to the inn, and, rapidly as it passed the window, O'Connor recognised the traveller to be Phillips. In a few minutes a knock at the door was heard, and the gallant captain was admitted to the presence of his commanding officer.

That two persons so opposite in character and feeling could ever have been on any terms beyond the external civilities of military companionship, would be unnatural. O'Connor despised Phillips for his effeminacy, and with the Irish pride attendant on an honourable descent, looked with contempt on the doubtful history of his parentage, and the more disgraceful patronage from which he derived his influence at the Horse Guards. Phillips, on the other hand, viewed the bold major with mixed sentiments of fear and envy. The high reputation this "founder of his own fortune" had acquired, placed him in that position in society which Phillips could never hope to reach; and, had he wanted an additional stimulus to confirm him in his designs upon the village beauty, a suspicion that she was an object of regard with his distinguished comrade would have been a sufficient inducement to press his suit, and thus wound the rival soldier in the only point in which he was, by any possibility, assailable.

Phillips appeared in high spirits. "I have succeeded," he said, addressing the commandant. "I reached town at a most favourable moment—nick'd the opportunity,

and am happy to acquaint you that I shall be appointed to a troop in the — Dragoon Guards, in the next Gazette."

"Indeed!" returned O'Connor, coldly.

"Fact, 'pon honour. Had I been an hour later, the chance was lost. Was I not lucky?"

"I think not. Had I a brother similarly circumstanced, I should have been delighted to hear that his carriage had been broken down; and had his neck been accidentally dislocated, I fancy I might have outlived the calamity."

"And," returned Phillips, reddening with vexation, "is the interchange of a company of foot for a troop of cavalry nothing in the estimation of Major O'Connor? For my part, I congratulate myself on the event."

"I wish I could do the same," replied the soldier.

"Major O'Connor," returned Phillips, with some haughtiness: "I came here to announce the event, and not to seek congratulations."

"You did wisely," was the reply, "in not asking what I could not have obliged you with."

There was an embarrassing pause. Phillips was burning with suppressed rage—O'Connor provokingly cold and sarcastic. In a few moments the former resumed the conversation.

"Major O'Conner, you are welcome to estimate my reasons for exchanging as you please; I can best appreciate the motives that obliged it; and it is perfectly unnecessary for me to enter into the private considerations which may have induced me to remain in England."

"Captain Phillips, your motives in taking a step that can only affect yourself, I have neither a right nor a wish to inquire into—doubtless they are important ones."

"There are more reasons," returned the captain, in a sarcastic tone of voice, "than Major O'Connor can at this moment imagine, but which, possibly, he may find out hereafter."

"And which he might make a shrewd guess at even now, if he pleased," replied the commandant.

"Oh! I perceive it; you have had another peep at the planets—another interview with the gipsy," said Phillips with a sneer.

"I have not *avoided her*, Captain Phillips. There is nothing in the future that *I fear*; nothing in *the past* that I am ashamed to hear repeated."

The major's sarcasm appeared to wound the captain deeply. He continued: "But there is no mystery in the matter; your approaching marriage is no secret."

"Marriage!" exclaimed the captain, with a laugh; "and with whom?"

"Surely, it would be unnecessary to name the lady, to whom, but a few mornings since, Captain Phillips plighted his vows upon the common?"

"Damnation!" exclaimed the captain, reddening with vexation. "I am under espionage, it would seem."

"I am no spy upon your actions, sir;" returned the major, warmly.

"Well, it is rather hard, you must admit, that a man cannot amuse himself a little in the forest, without having his flirtations chronicled over the country."

"I do not precisely understand the terms you use," said O'Connor, coldly; "nor comprehend how a serious suit like yours to Miss Howard, can be so indifferently described."

"Upon my life, Major O'Connor, it would appear that all my actions are to be submitted to a rigorous inquisition. It is rather a novelty in military life, for a man to be censured for his *affaires du cœur*; and undergo a jobation from his commander, for kissing a rustic beauty in a clump of trees, with the lady's own consent."

"Captain Phillips," returned the major, with increasing sternness; "I must object to the levity of the language you employ, when alluding to your addresses to Miss Howard."

"And," said the captain, hotly, "I must protest against any interference on your part, in an affair essentially my own, and with which you are totally unconnected."

"I have a deep interest in Miss Howard's happiness," replied the commander, "and I demand—"

"Nothing, if you please, from me, Major. Miss Howard has a father, and I am quite prepared to give him an explanation, whenever he chooses to require one."

He took his hat, and moved towards the door, but O'Connor, with a tone and manner that would not be gainsayed, waved his hand, and signalled that he should remain.

"A few words before we separate, Captain Phillips—and they are the last, except officially, which shall ever pass between us."

"Just as you please," returned Phillips, with a formal bow.

"I have no sister," continued the major, "no female relative that is dear to me. Had I one, and any living man dared tamper with her affections, or think of her with disrespect, what think you would be my conduct?"

"Upon my soul," replied the captain with a puppyish drawl, "I cannot pretend to guess."

"I would exact from him speedy satisfaction, and teach him such a lesson, as should make him tremble for the future, before he trifled with a woman's love."

"Indeed, Major!" said the captain sarcastically; while O'Connor continued with increasing warmth—

"But if the injury were deeper—if, profiting by absence of suspicion, he abused her confidence, and wrought her shame and ruin;—what would be my conduct then?"

The captain bowed, and shrugged his shoulders.

"I would follow him to the ends of the earth; I would tear him from a sanctuary; I would hang like a bandog on his steps; night and day would I follow him, and never relax my pursuit, until in the heart's blood of the treacherous villain, I had cleansed the stain upon the lost one's honour, Phillips!" and he pressed his hand heavily on the captain's shoulder, while his brows

grew dark, and his voice became tremulous and hollow —“ Phillips! Mary Howard is my adopted sister;— *wrong her*, and an altar shall not save you! Farewell —we undersand each other.”

He pointed to the door. The captain, with lips pale with rage and craven apprehension, hurried from the apartment, and the major was left alone.

CHAPTER VI.

JEALOUSY.

IAGO. Pray be content.

OTHELLO.

Oh!—blood, Iago, blood!

IAGO. Patience, I say; your mind, perchance, may change.

OTHELLO. Never, Iago.

SHAKESPEARE.

FROM the inconvenient hour the gipsy had named for their interview, O'Connor ordered dinner in his own chamber, and declined joining the mess-party. He was anxious to converse with Ellen again; for his recent tête-à-tête with Phillips proved that her suspicions were well founded; and convinced him that the captain's pursuit of Mary Howard was not intended to have an honourable close. But to watch over that still beloved girl was denied, and his departure for the Peninsula would remove Phillips from his *surveillance*. Mr. Howard, from the simplicity of his character and ignorance of the world, was but a poor protector. All O'Connor could do, he had done; "Fears for themselves mean villains have;" and personal apprehension might deter Phillips from attempting a seduction which, whether successful or disconcerted, must draw down on him the certain vengeance of a determined enemy. It was only left to him to warn Mary of her danger, and guard the unsuspecting girl against the specious sophistry of an accomplished scoundrel.

By a circuitous route and unperceived, he left the village and directed his course towards the gipsy's trysting-place. A lane closed at either side by lofty quickset hedges, just now bursting into life, led round the hamlet gardens to the common. It was an unfrequented path; and from its retirement had been the favourite walk of Mary Howard. The soldier traversed

it rapidly, and was emerging from its enclosures, when, at a little distance, he remarked a man climb the paling of the parson's orchard, and a second look assured him it was his rival. Phillips was evidently seeking a private interview with his mistress, and the precautions he took to elude observation, showed that he intended his visit should be a secret one.

O'Connor's blood boiled with fury. What was to be done? His first impulse was to confront Phillips at the moment—apprise Mr. Howard of all he knew, and all he suspected—and require a distinct avowal of his rival's intentions touching the "old man's daughter." But this was impossible; for, at their parting interview, Mary had requested him to keep her attachment secret, and exacted a promise that he would not pain her father by letting him discover that he had offered her his hand, and the offer had been rejected. After a minute's reflection he decided on keeping his appointment in the forest, confiding the whole to Ellen, and taking counsel from her.

He hurried across the common—and, with a heart bursting with jealous rage, reached the rendezvous, in the coppice, and found the gipsy already there. Her keen glance rested for an instant on the soldier's countenance, and she perceived at once the storm of passion that was raging in his tortured bosom.

"You are ill at ease, major," she said, sharply.

"What unusual occurrence has disturbed you, thus?"

"Occurrence, Ellen! I shall go mad. Hell is raging in my breast, and I could cut any body's throat who crossed me!"

"This excitement is indeed singular in one that has buffeted the world, as you have, and borne the rubs of fortune gallantly."

"Alas! Ellen," said the soldier, in a subdued voice, "till now the breast was never writhed, nor had to learn the agony that awaits a love so warm and hopeless as mine—and that too with the maddening thought, that my happiness has been blasted by a villain, but for whose damning influence, the only heart I ever sought or coveted would have been all mine own!"

"You have seen Phillips?" said the gipsy.

"Ay; and unmasked him, Ellen. Your words were indeed prophetic. She whom I love so devotedly—for whom this breast is bleeding—he regards but as a plaything, to be as easily courted and as easily thrown aside. You spoke truly, Ellen; and Phillips seeks that artless being's ruin."

"And will effect it," replied the gipsy, "unless heaven has otherwise decreed it."

"Never!" exclaimed the soldier passionately; "I will warn her of his villany and her danger."

"It will not avail."

"Then by my hopes of heaven, I'll cut his throat if the church."

"Will that," said the gipsy, "restore the blighted flower, after his touch has withered it?"

"I will anticipate his villany," continued the soldier, storming with fury. "He shall fight me before an hour. I'll insult him in the street—I'll strike him in the mess-room!"

"And what will that avail?" said the gipsy, calmly. "The coward can always evade a battle. The act you meditate will only give notoriety to your disappointment, and apprise the world that your suit has been unfortunate, and another's more successful. No, no, O'Connor. Patience! I will watch over Mary Howard as a mother; and if human means can avert her ruin, I will save her!"

The soldier remained silent for a moment, as if struggling to repress his rage; suddenly he caught the gipsy's hand.

"Ellen," he said, in hollow tones—"Ellen, till lately I never knew what it was to love—and till now I never knew what it was to hate! Is it not distracting to think that at this moment Mary may be in my rival's arms, listening to his hollow professions, and answering his false suit with the fond confessions of artless love? Oh, I could strike the villain dead!"

"O'Connor," replied the gipsy, reproachfully, "Is this weakness in keeping with your character? Is it fitting because a simple girl has fooled away her heart, and

bestowed her regard upon a scoundrel, that the soldier should turn driveller—the hero a whimpering school-boy! Rouse yourself! Sit down upon this bank. You may remember, before we parted last night, I promised to tell you something of my history.”

• “Yes,” cried the major, eagerly; do let me hear it, Ellen—” and he sighed heavily. “I will try and listen with composure—and—if I can, forget Mary Howard.”

The gipsy cast her eyes across the forest, as if to ascertain that the soldier and herself were safe from interruption. Far as her glance ranged, no living thing was visible. She placed herself beside him on the turf, and then commenced her wild and eventful narrative.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GIPSY'S STORY.

But who was she?
 Was she as those who love their lords, or they
 Who love the lords of others? Such have been,
 Even in the olden time, Rome's annals say.
 Was she a matron of Cornelia's mien,
 Or the light air of Egypt's graceful queen,
 Profuse of joy, or 'gainst it did she war,
 Inveterate in virtue?

CHILDE HAROLD.

How changed since last her speaking eye
 Glanced gladness round the glittering room,
 Where high-born men were proud to wait,
 Where beauty watched to imitate
 Her gentle voice—her lovely mien.

PARASINA.

THE first recollections of infancy lie in a gipsy encampment. I remember my mother, but of my father have no distinct idea. I have, however, confused notions of our wandering life—sometimes reposing in a barn—sometimes bivouacked beneath a hedge—while our journeyings, I was carried in the pannier of a donkey, with a load of tinker's implements deposited in the opposite basket, to form an equipoise.

The next era that I remember in my history, was when residing with a nobleman's park-keeper. The girl's lady was childish; and having accidentally seen me in my mother's arms, was struck with my beauty, and determined to adopt me. I remember that I could scarcely reconcile myself to the quiet and regular household of the comfortable yeoman; I sighed after the errand life to which I had been accustomed from my childhood, and increased indulgence alone overcame my antipathy to a settled residence. According to the

power. Accordingly, an invitation was despatched to his nephew—of course it was thankfully embraced—and that evening Henry Loftus, the discarded son, was formally presented by the countess to her *gipsey protégée*.

I have already mentioned that our residence was secluded; that the visitings of its inmates were limited; and that, owing to the circumstances attendant on my birth and adoption, an extended intimacy with the neighbouring gentry was denied. Those who resorted to the hall were, with a few exceptions, persons of advanced age; and the younger men of ordinary manner, and indifferent exteriors. Imagine my delight, when a military personage of prepossessing appearance and very elegant address, was presented to me. He seemed a being of another caste; something I had read of, but never seen. At first sight Henry Loftus caught my fancy, and with a girlish passion—the strongest while it endures—I loved the handsome stranger.

I need not dwell upon the story of a first attachment. Henry Loftus engrossed my whole thoughts, and while the brief delusion lasted, the world held nothing worth possessing but his love. A month rolled on; while he resided with us, the hall appeared an earthly paradise; but, alas! he was already weary of its retirement, and sighed to return to the scenes of dissipation from which his misconduct had exiled him.

Nor was the opportunity wanted long. The earl having been apprised how deeply his brother was annoyed, at his having espoused the quarrel of a child who had so shamefully abused the generosity of a too-indulgent parent, executed a will, barring the rest of the family from inheriting some large estates, which he had the power of devising as he pleased, and naming the discarded son his successor. This strange act, however, his lordship kept a secret, although he exhibited unequivocal marks of his partiality. Having ascertained the amount of his embarrassments, he gave his nephew a check for their liquidation; lodged a further sum to enable him to repurchase a commission; and, to his own astonishment and that of all the world,

the *roué* was directed to return to the metropolis, pay off his debts of honour; and, if he had grace to profit by past experience, enter upon life anew.

But with Henry Loftus profligacy was too deeply rooted to be eradicated, and his vicious habits were irreclaimable. He was now possessor of a sum of money that seemed inexhaustible, and delighted at the prospect of revisiting London. He came to my dressing-room to say farewell; I was unprepared for a sudden separation—the thought of his leaving me was distracting—and, in the madness of the moment, I owned my love, and confessed that life without him was insupportable. Loftus perceived the wildness of my passion; and, to worthily repay the earl's bounty, and *éclater* his own return to town, he determined that I should accompany him. Deep were his declarations of attachment: brilliantly he pictured the elysium that London alone could realise; and ended in urging an elopement. My vanity was excited; my imagination dazzled; and, in a rash hour, I consented to his request. His servant managed to convey away my clothes and jewels among his master's baggage; at midnight, through a drawing-room window, I stepped out upon the lawn; reached a private outlet from the park; found my lover waiting for me; entered the carriage; and flung myself, in tears, upon his breast! The horses went off at speed; and I left the hall for ever.

We arrived in town, drove to a fashionable lodging, and the reappearance of Henry Loftus soon caused an unusual sensation. A month before, he had fled from the metropolis, a ruined blackleg—then, “every tongue his follies named”—but now, he had returned with a full purse; and, prouder boast, had repaid his benefactor's munificence, by robbing him of his favourite *protégée*.

Brief and brilliant was our guilty career. I figured at the opera, and I was followed in the park. The vanity of Loftus made him desirous of exhibiting his beautiful victim, and I was accordingly brought to every haunt of fashion, where persons like me could gain admission. But the days of his prosperity were numbered.

The demon of play led him to the gaming-table again ; sharpers, abler than himself, plundered him without mercy : and, in one month from our arrival, my destroyer was once more a beggar. A few minutes after he had despatched his servant, with a check, to draw his last fifty from the banker, the morning paper was brought in ; there the earl's death was noticed, and judge what the *roué's* feelings were, when he read the particulars connected with the event, as set forth in a lengthened paragraph. Enraged at the base ingratitude of his nephew, the earl never recovered the shock attendant on the seduction of his *élève*. Feeling himself indisposed, he tore the will that had left Loftus his heir, and me thirty thousand pounds, and executed a new one, bequeathing his immense estates to his proper successors. Loftus's name, however, was duly mentioned in a codicil—there was a bequest for his use—a shilling to provide himself a halter ! The earl died before he could quarrel with his relatives again. Henry's father had now a title, and a noble fortune to support it ; and the profligate, his son, was once more a ruined man—a broken blackguard.

So quickly did the story of this downfal travel, that in a few hours afterwards Loftus was arrested ; he contrived, however by parting with his watch and rings, to effect his liberation, and kept close within doors, to evade other creditors, who were seeking him. Late in the evening he sent me to Richmond, with a letter to a friend, who, as he informed me, was heavily his debtor. I sought him at the Star and Garter in vain, and reached home long after midnight from an unsuccessful embassy. I found my lodgings in confusion ; Loftus was gone, and my maid, a Frenchwoman, along with him. He had stolen my jewels, and she carried off my clothes. Though hurried, he kindly left a note for me ; it was short and explicit—telling me that he had left England for ever, and to shift for myself as I best could : in a short postscript, he said, that a scoundrel of his acquaintance, whose name and address he mentioned, would take me into keeping, and hinted to se-

cure this desirable arrangement, I should be speedy in making application to "his friend."

I shall despatch the rest of his history in a few words: he went to Paris—haunted the Palais Royal—played, and was cleaned out; cheated, and was kicked by an Irish officer. He was abandoned by his companion, my maid; and one morning found in the Morgue, having been picked out of the Seine, with his throat cut; whether the act was his own, or an assassin's nobody inquired—for no one cared.

I had been kept in such a whirlwind of pleasure; novelty, and dissipation, that for a time I could not believe myself deserted, and looked at passing events as nothing but illusions. Gradually the truth broke upon me; I became alive to the wretchedness of my situation, and the falsehood of man burst upon me with withering violence. The warmth of my natural temper, and utter ignorance of the world, the suddenness with which the veil was rent asunder, and the being whom I had invested with superhuman qualities, denuded his fascinations, and presented to my view in all the nakedness of exposed and acknowledged villany; was too much—and a brain fever resulted. Youth bore me through. With returning reason, I found myself stretched on a mattress, in the ward of a fever-hospital, surrounded by a score of sufferers, as forlorn and deserted as myself.

I recovered; but where was I to turn to? There was not a being on earth, I thought, that had not some resting-place but me. From the Hall, I was totally shut out. The countess would not hear my name mentioned; she had become a Methodist; and one of her fancies was, that her former regard for me, had been a delusion of the enemy of man, to endanger her salvation. Where was my natural protector, the gipsy? God only knew. Her I determined to seek—for where would the wild bird direct her weary wing, but to the nest from which she first stretched her untamed pinion? To find my mother was a difficult undertaking—the migrations of her tribe were chiefly regulated by the

seasons, and this was some clue to a discovery. I made the attempt; and after a world of adventure, reached the bivouac of the wanderers.

I endeavoured to forget what I once had, and what I might now have been, and accommodated my dress to my present destitution. As I neared the gipsy haunts, my spirit appeared to revive. My beauty occasioned me much annoyance, but I evaded or repulsed the impertinences I received; and with feelings of unspeakable delight, found myself on the tenth evening, beneath the canvass roof that had sheltered my infant cradle.

For two years I led a roving life, wild in the extreme, but not without its pleasures; and, while my parent lived, I never regretted the singular vicissitudes of fortune, that had annihilated my influence and splendour, and again made me a mendicant and a vagabond.

It was now the end of autumn, and our tribe had formed an encampment upon this very common. My mother, who had been for some days indisposed, rapidly became worse, and the disease was ascertained to be a malignant fever. The weather changed; wind and rain rendered our bivouac cold and humid; and to remove my sick parent to some place where she would at least be certain of shelter from the inclement season, was the only hope that remained of her recovery. But where was that asylum to be found? Few would receive a gipsy when in health, beneath their roof-tree; and who would admit the wanderer, afflicted with a dangerous malady? Momently the poor sufferer grew worse; and, as a last resource, I hastened to the village, to try if there could be found one with sufficient charity to succour a dying outcast. From every house I was harshly repulsed—the name of a contagious disorder brought horror with it to all who heard my story—every shelter was refused—and I was shunned by all, as if the plague spot was on my forehead. Every dwelling was closed against me, and I left the hamlet in despair, to rejoin the dying wanderer in our damp and cheerless hovel, and received her parting sigh upon a bed of litter, from which a pampered hound would turn.

I had already passed the vicarage, when I perceived

Mr. Howard standing in the porch of the building, with a sweet little girl in his arms. Both were habited in mourning, for he had lost his lady but recently. A sudden impulse induced me to turn back. I did so; and told him of my mother's misery. He listened with a look of gentle sympathy. "And is she so very ill?" he inquired, in a tone of commiseration, so different from the harsh accents with which the villagers had rejected my suit! "She is dying," I replied. "Dying! and in the forest. Poor girl, I will go with you." He called the nurse, placed his daughter in her arms, and instantly accompanied me to our wretched bivouac.

The sight of so much misery appeared to shock him. My mother was delirious. Mr. Howard bent over and felt her pulse. "It is fever," he muttered, "and of the worst type. She must be removed instantly. It would be a crying sin to desert a human being in the forest, and leave her to perish like a masterless dog. Carry her to my home, and I will go on before and prepare a place to receive her." It was done: the dying woman was borne to the good man's dwelling. She was tenderly nursed; the village doctor attended her; the parson visited her constantly, and was seen praying beside the bed of fever, which the lowest menial of his household could not be persuaded to approach.

But why dwell upon the event, and repine that she was taken from me? It was her hour, and destiny had willed it so. She died: her remains were decently inhumed; and I was left in the world—alone!

A few mornings after the gipsy's funeral, Mr. Howard sent for me, and I attended him in his study. He presented me with a purse that contained some guineas and a quantity of silver coins which, after her decease, had been found concealed upon my mother's person. The good man looked at me with deep compassion, as he murmured in an under tone, "She is too young and handsome to escape temptation, and avoid the snares which are ever laid for the unsuspecting. What is your name?" I answered him—"Ellen." He said, "I tremble for you. If you attach yourself to those wandering people who left the forest when their com-

panion, your mother, was on her dying bed, you will be assailed by temptations which, at your years, mostly prove irresistible. I cannot see you on the very brink of destruction without an attempt to save you. Here you would be secure. Had my lamented wife been spared, she would have been a more suitable protector. But remain here, and while I live, this roof shall shelter you.

I burst into tears, and accepted gratefully the good man's invitation. I was indeed weary of the world, such as it had been to me. I had been the child of strange destinies; a very shuttlecock of fortune; born in beggary and nursed in opulence; courted, admired, and followed; ruined, plundered, and deserted. Here, in this peaceful and secluded dwelling, I could wear away my appointed days, removed alike from those maddening moments of pleasure and attendant misery, to which the denizens of earth are subjected by the laws of being.

Alas! I little knew myself, when I supposed that one with the wild blood that circulated in my veins, would remain long the contented member of a regulated and comfortable household. When spring came, and birds sung, and trees blossomed; I began to recal the many hours I passed in childhood 'under the greenwood tree.' I thought the forest blither than the town; and like an imprisoned hawk, longed in secret for one wild flight over scenes endeared to me by a thousand recollections. Yet, there were two objects that bound me to the parsonage, and checked my desire for wandering—the memory of the dead, and love of the living bound me to the place. My mother's grave was in the village cemetery, and I had conceived a deep attachment for the lovely orphan, who had been principally intrusted to my charge. I think these gentler ties might have subdued my wandering inclinations, had not unexpected temptation rendered the impulse I was combating too powerful for resistance.

There was an annual fair holding in a neighbouring hamlet, and the servants of the parsonage had obtained Mr. Howard's permission to visit it. They invited me

to accompany them; but I had some misgivings that made me decline going. Renewed entreaties, and a promise of gay ribands from my admirers—for I had made some rustic conquests—at last induced me to consent, and we set out for the scene of merriment and love-making.

The first sight of the tents—the distant sound of music—waving pennons and painted show boxes—booths exhibiting toys and trinkets—and all the display of holiday finery, so tempting to the fancy of the rustic maid, all raised anew my gipsy propensities, and my heart beat with delight in looking at a scene associated with my first ideas of pleasure. I mixed in the merry throng, and had roamed for some time through the crowded fair before I discovered that I had strayed from my companions. I turned instantly to seek them when a hand touched mine, and a voice, too familiar to be mistaken, whispered, “Ellen!” It was an ancient female of our tribe; she beckoned me to follow: I obeyed, and we left the throng unobserved.

It is unnecessary to state more of our interview, than that the gipsy urged me to join the community again, that eventually I consented, and it was arranged that she should come at midnight to the parsonage, and I should abandon my peaceful home, and once more become a wanderer.

I hurried from the scene of gayety to one of a very opposite description—the village cemetery; and, sitting down upon my mother’s grave, wept bitterly. The evening was closing before I could bring myself to quit the turf that covered her ashes; and with a heavy heart I returned to Mr. Howard’s residence, to make the necessary preparations for my journey.

As the hour drew near my resolution failed, and I regretted that I had promised to meet the gipsy. I hung over my lovely and innocent charge, as she lay calmly sleeping, and while my tears fell fast, invoked blessings on the child, and covered her smiling face with kisses. Except my mother, I had never loved another half so dearly, and to tear myself away required more firmness than I could command. I was still at the infant’s bed

when midnight knelled from the old tower. Presently some particles of gravel struck lightly against the casement. I looked out—the gipsy was below. Again and again I kissed the gentle child—flung my bundle to my companion—silently descended from the window—took a farewell look at the parsonage—the forest was before me—I was now homeless and unprotected—and, at nineteen, alone upon the world. But why complain? It was predestined so.

For a time a wandering life passed pleasantly enough. My beauty rendered me an object of consideration as a daughter of the tribe; and among the swarthy community I had more than one suitor. Michael, as the leader was named, honoured me with his addresses. He was a bold and dexterous fellow, acute and daring, with a superior intelligence, that under other circumstances might have earned a name, and placed him high in worldly estimation. But there were countervailing qualities in the gipsy chief. He was violent and suspicious—jealous and vindictive. I disliked him. His suit was urged with that confidence of success which marks an overweening vanity; and when it was haughtily rejected, his rage was boundless. In vain he changed his tone, and tried both flattery and threats—in vain he pleaded that by the wild ordinance of the tribe I had been assigned him as his companion. Flattery failed—and to the gipsy regulations I refused obedience. This infraction of arbitrary laws was of course resented, and Michael's claim upon me as a wife, supported by the whole community. It was idle to resist what all had determined; and no alternative remained but submission to an arbitrary decree, or an immediate elopement—and, of course, I chose the latter.

It required, however, considerable caution to effect an escape without risking a discovery, as that event would draw down the vengeance of the tribe, and expose me to the mildest penalty of disobedience—an instant union with the chief. But mine was a determined spirit—and I exerted all my ingenuity to mask my design, and not excite suspicion. As if influenced by the general decision, I gave a reluctant consent. Michael

was overjoyed ; the gang delighted at an approaching scene of revelry ; and the third evening was appointed to witness the performance of that rude ceremony, which constitutes a gipsy marriage.

For two days, I found no opportunity of quitting the encampment unperceived, but on the third I was more successful. I managed to escape, and directed my course towards Canterbury, from which city our bivouac was not very distant.

As I was afterwards informed, my flight was quickly known, and it caused a direful commotion among the wanderers. Instant pursuit was given—the tribe scattered themselves over the country—and from their cunning and celerity it was never doubted that the fugitive would be promptly recovered ; and all resolved, that as entreaty failed, force should be employed if necessary, to make me the consort of their chief.

Michael's rage was awful ; his pride was wounded that a gipsy should decline his alliance ; and that one so artful and suspicious as himself, should be outwitted by a simple girl. His pursuit, of course, was vigorous—he outstripped his companions far ; and learning from a beggar the route I had taken, with amazing speed and certain accuracy he followed my flying steps, like a bloodhound on his quest.

Canterbury was in sight, when exhausted by rapid exertions to escape I was obliged to rest, and turning into a small plantation, seated myself upon a fallen tree. I breathed freely—I had succeeded—the city of refuge was before me, and there I should be secure against any attempts which the gipsy tribe should make to repossess their errant daughter. What future course should I pursue ? Should I return and claim Mr. Howard's protection, or seek fresh fortunes as a wanderer. I smiled, when fancying the confusion my escape would cause, and the fury and disappointment of the fiery bridegroom, when it was discovered that the lady of his choice had played him truant, and left her ardent lover without a parting farewell. " Yes," I said, " it was well planned, and boldly executed ; Michael, thou must seek another mistress ; I have no desire to become

a gipsy queen. How will he storm," I continued, "when evening comes, and the bride is wanting; the fugitive escaped pursuit; and the bridal festival turned into an angry brawl!" I laughed. "Oh, that I could see him for a moment, and whisper in his swarthy ear, that girl's wit was keener than a chieftain's cunning."

"You shall be gratified," returned a voice that made my blood run cold; I threw back a hasty glance, and over my shoulder peered the vindictive eyes of my exasperated and deserted suitor.

"So, ho!" he said, in a low deep voice, "Is the wild bird so suddenly reclaimed? and did a novice like thee trifle with my love, and fancy she could evade it? Well you have cost me a ten miles' race; but surely a smart breathing was purchased cheaply, by winning a bride like thee, girl? Up, Ellen, thy husband waits for thee."

"Thy husband!" I repeated passionately.

"Ay, thine!—no earthly power shall sever us"—and he gave a fiendish laugh. "Come let us be friends; kiss me, Nell—I forgive thy flight for this time, wench!"

"Kiss thee!" I exclaimed as I sprang up, and waved him from me. "No, Michael, force only could make me yours."

"Indeed!" he muttered, while with a deep imprecation he added, "Then force shall;" and he seized my arm roughly, while I screamed loudly for help. The words were scarcely spoken, when a noise was heard, as if somebody was crushing through the brushwood. The gipsy dropped my arm, and searched his bosom for a weapon. Next moment a man vaulted lightly over the paling, and haughtily demanded the occasion of the outcry.

The stranger was young and handsome; rather above the middle size, with a person that indicated more activity than strength. There was that assured character in his bearing which bespeaks a fearless heart. He was dressed as sportsmen generally are, and bore no weapon, except a walking-stick. Notwithstanding the plainness of his shooting-dress, the air and manner of

he stranger were too decided, to allow his profession to be doubted for a moment.

Michael glared upon him, with a mixed look of fear and hatred, as he impudently demanded "What brought ~~in~~ there?" The stranger's lip curled scornfully, while he measured the gipsy chief from head to foot.

"Brought me here!" he replied, in a high tone. Scoundrel! repeat your insolence, and I promise you broken head." Then turning to me, he continued in gentler voice, "Has this ruffian alarmed you, my poor irl? Fear nothing; come with me, and I will protect you."

Michael advanced a step—"She is my wife," he said; beware how you lay a hand on what is mine."

"Yours!" I exclaimed. "'Tis false. Yours I am not. Yours I never will be."

The gipsy made a forward movement, as if he intended to seize me again, and I implored the soldier's protection.

"Hallo! fellow"—he shouted, "hands off, if you value whole bones. Come, pretty one, I will see you safe to Canterbury."

Michael's looks became darker and more ferocious. Facing himself between me and the gate of the plantation, he suddenly unsheathed a long and peculiar clasp-knife which he always carried on his person, and swore deep oath, that if the stranger did not leave us, he would bury the weapon in his heart.

But the soldier was in no wise daunted. He returned his menace with a look of bold defiance, and raised his stick, as if preparing to parry the gipsy's thrust. Suddenly, and without any apparent effort, except a slight movement of the wrist, he smote Michael's hand so sharply, that the knife flew from his grasp, and fell ten yards distance into the thick copsewood. The gipsy made an attempt to recover his lost weapon, but the soldier stepped between him and the spot where it fell.

"Halt!" he shouted, in a voice that obliged the ruffian to obey the order. "Fellow, I have given thee a bruised head, and another step ensures thee a broken head. If I say—or, by St. Patrick, I'll crack that skull of

thine as I would a walnut-shell, and leave as many marks upon thy swarthy hide as will cause you to remember the touch of an Irish sapling; ay, to the latest hour of your life."

He said—and taking my hand led me to the gate, without any attempt on Michael's part to bar our egress from the wood. We were now upon the high road, and, of course, in comparative safety. The gipsy lifted his fallen knife, and returned it to his bosom, while he looked after us with demoniac glance, in which hate, jealousy, and disappointment united.

"You and I shall meet again, and your best blood pay the forfeit of your interference"—he muttered, as he clenched his fist, and grinned like an angry mastiff at the soldier. The person threatened coolly waved his hand. "Off, you dusky vagabond!" he exclaimed; "I see some of my people approaching; and if my memory holds good, there is a horsepond at no great distance."

The gipsy looked in the direction to which the soldier's eyes had turned, and observed several men in uniforms moving slowly towards the wood.

"Farewell"—he said—"farewell, Ellen; at least for a time. Many a bitter hour this morning's slight shall cost thee; ay—when thou art *mine*, and no hand is near to succour."

"*Yours!* Never, Michael!"

He gave a parting look of deadly meaning, tossed his thin arm above his head, and continued, in a tone convulsive from the violence of his passion—"Mine! yes, mine. Men and fiends shall never move Michael's resolution. Ellen," and he dropped his voice—"mine you shall be, though I hang for it!"

These were his last words; for, bounding into the coppice, he vanished in the thick plantation.

My deliverer looked for a short space at the place where the gipsy disappeared. "Upon my life," he said, "a pleasant sort of gentleman! a suitor who will not be refused, it seems. How came one so pretty as you, Ellen, to fall into that fellow's company? It was fortunate that I was netting rabbits in the wood, or that

bronzed ruffian would have done you some serious mischief."

In reply to his questions, I told him a portion of my story, and mentioned my orphanage, and the varied circumstances that obliged me to fly from the gipsy encampment. During the brief recital he listened with deep attention. "And are both parents dead?" he asked me.

"They are, sir."

"Have you no other relative alive?"

"I have none except the members of the wild tribe I left this morning."

"Poor soul!" he said; "few are so forlorn as you appear to be. Where do you propose to go?"

"I cannot tell."

"Have you not some acquaintance?"

"None who could serve me."

He looked at me. "I never saw one so beautiful and so desolate. Good heaven! have you considered the risk that one so attractive as yourself must be exposed to in a world where men are nowise scrupulous, and matter not the means by which the end is accomplished?"

I sighed heavily; and the past flashed painfully to my recollection.

The stranger was silent for a moment. "I am but a sorry counsellor"—he said; "Come, you must have me for lack of better; and between danger and yourself I can only interpose the honour of my country. Let me think. My sergeant's wife will take care of you at present, and we will then try and find out if a better home can be obtained."

He looked at me attentively. "It is wondrous beauty for a wanderer!" and continued in a low tone, "A strange adventure altogether! I with the lightest reputation in a dissipated corps—I selected to be mentor of a being so lovely as thou, Ellen. Well, no matter—all are not safely judged by look; and in me, notwithstanding all my levity, you may obtain an honest protection than from men of graver exterior."

Will you trust me, Ellen ; and confide in one who never yet failed friend or foe ?”

My eyes turned upon his. I read his countenance with gipsy caution. The handsome outlines had kindled into nobleness ; his cheek was flushing ; while the honest expansion of the brow told that in his words not a particle of treachery was lurking. What should I do ? What but cling to him as a heaven-sent friend, and throw myself fearlessly upon his generosity ? I did so, and had no reason to regret it, although my hopes rested on the mercurial fancy of a hair-brained Irishman.

George Harley was four-and-twenty ; his father dead ; his patrimony wasted ; and his sole dependence a company of foot. In all things his was an anomalous character. His habits were simple and luxurious, he was shrewd and witty, weak and improvident ; while the warmth of an unbridled temper,

“ Mild with the gentle—with the froward, stern,”

led him into eternal scrapes, from which an excellent natural understanding, had it been cultivated and developed, scarcely managed to extricate him. He was perfectly single-hearted, and his purse and person alike ready at a call. Honour with him was a sort of phantom, an undefined idea of a feeling that should direct a gentleman's career. He was humane. To witness the corporal punishment of an irreclaimable delinquent pained him to the soul ; although that same morning, and for an imaginary offence, he had dangerously wounded an old companion. His virtues were noble ; his failings pardonable ; the whole was a union of opposites, which rendered George Harley an object of regard and fear—envied by some, detested by others ; in short, a man in different times, and different tempers, pitied and admired, courted and avoided.

The soldier's wife, to whose care I was consigned, procured me a lodging beside her own, in a neat cottage in the suburbs of the town ; and, from her kindness and attention, it was evident that Harley's charges had been strict. Her husband was the captain's pay-sergeant, she acted as his laundress, and to my young

protector both appeared strongly attached. But Harley was just the man to be a regimental favourite. His humanity had procured him the title of "the soldier's friend," while for all his faults there was a ready apology, and the outbreakings of his temper were reckoned only as the ebullitions of a martial spirit. No matter how long the march, how heavy the roads, Harley was always at the head of the light company, while his gig was laden with children and knapsacks, and his horse mounted by some soldier who had fallen lame. Haughty and punctilious towards his superiors, to his men he was affable and kind. He was indeed well suited for a leader; and those he commanded looked to him with confidence and regard. In the license permitted the soldier when marching, the officer was not too proud to share; and in the hour of danger, when others would have said "go on," Harley would have shouted "follow!"

There was a studied delicacy observed in my preserver's conduct towards me, which, certainly the circumstances under which we met would scarcely warrant. Until the second day he left me to myself, nor did he visit me then, until he had ascertained from Mrs. Owen that I was desirous to speak to him.

When Harley came to my assistance in the wood, he found a gipsy-girl in the wild costume of her tribe; but when he visited me at the sergeant's lodging, I was becomingly attired in the neat and simple dress that I had worn when in Mr. Howard's residence. The alteration in my appearance was striking, if I might judge from Harley's surprise. Nor was he less changed, for the light infantry uniform he was dressed in was well calculated to show to its best advantage a figure light, elegant, and athletic.

Our interview was long. I found his manners extremely prepossessing; for without the tinsel assurance of high life, there was an openness, a manly honesty in all that Harley said, that won me more than a courtlier address, where the polish is quite apparent, but the sincerity doubtful. We parted with an engagement to meet on the morrow, and a promise on my part to

acquaint him with the particulars of a history so varied in all its fortunes as mine.

He came next day, and listened with deep interest to a detail of my earlier life. But when I reached the period in my story when Loftus was introduced to the Hall—when I mentioned my elopement and subsequent abandonment, he leaped from his chair.

“The double-damned villain!” he exclaimed, while his eyes lightened with rage. “Alas! poor Ellen; and were you too that scoundrel’s victim? Is it not a strange coincidence in our fates, that the same smooth-tongued traitor should have ruined both?”

I expressed astonishment, and he thus continued:

“The tale of folly is soon told. We were school-fellows, and Loftus my favourite companion. He was weak and timid, and I fought his battles. His allowance was small, mine was liberal—and we had a common purse.

“We separated at fifteen—he to go to Oxford, and I to join a regiment in India, to which I had been gazetted.

“Six years passed. My father died, and I came home and succeeded to my inheritance. It was unfortunately money in the funds, and I had a discretionary power to use it as I pleased. I came to London to purchase my company; and there I found my once-loved school-fellow, who had left the university, and was now a lieutenant in the Coldstream. Of course, our intimacy was renewed—on my part with unchanged affection, on his, with a fixed determination to avail himself of my confidence, and plunder me of my last guinea.

“It is not necessary to follow the scoundrel through all the sinuous plans with which his object was achieved. I was a blind and ready dupe. I had not a suspicion of him, while all besides knew, that my false friend was plucking me to the very pen-feather.

“For some months I was absent in Ireland with my regiment, and the vicissitudes of Loftus’s fortunes reached me but imperfectly—one paper stated he was ruined; another, that his uncle had adopted him. Again I read

a strange story of his carrying off the earl's ward ; that he was disinherited, and again a castaway and broken man. All this conflation of statements was puzzling—it was incomprehensible that of one man's doings so many versions should be given—and I obtained leave of absence, to find, if possible, where the truth lay.

"I reached London safely, and my first visit was to my friend ; but he was invisible. I entered an adjoining coffee-room, and read there a paragraph, in an evening print, that left the ruin of Loftus no longer a matter of report.

"The morning, however, brought with it a full exposé of his villany ; yet, such was my fatuity, that with irrefragable proof before my eyes, I could scarcely bring myself to credit it. One by one his deep-laid plans were developed ; and it was plain, that I had been coolly and unmercifully plundered. Boiling with rage, I determined on immediate pursuit, and drove to my bankers ; but there Loftus had anticipated me, and three days before, by a forged check, drawn out my last guinea.

"Nothing but vengeance was left, and I determined to hunt the black-hearted traitor to the death. For a time all trace of him was lost, and two or three attempts which I made to discover him failed. At last, I heard that he had been recently seen in Paris, and thither I proceeded. For several days I haunted the gaming-houses, but Loftus was not there, although, until the last week, he had been a regular attendant.

"I found him, Ellen ! where ? Where such a villain should be found—in the Morgue ! I never saw any thing so diabolical as the dead man's countenance ! His throat from ear to ear was severed. I gazed on the horrid spectacle, if not with pleasure, certainly without pity. I had been saved some trouble ; I should have killed the ruffian had we met ; but his felon hand, or (and more probably) a murderer's knife, prevented the necessity of my becoming his executioner."

* * *

For a week Harley was a constant visiter, and less acuteness than I possessed would have easily discovered, that every hour he became more fascinated with

my beauty. This feeling of affection was reciprocated; the bold and careless soldier was now tenderly beloved; he had treated me with tenderness and respect, and that had endeared him doubly.

It is not difficult to conjecture how our intimacy might have terminated, had events progressed in their common course; but an unexpected occurrence hurried matters to a close. I had more than once rambled in the evening through the streets, and breathed the fresh air, which to one like me, was indispensable. Closely muffled, I had, hitherto, escaped observation; and Michael's threats had made me confine my walks to the streets and suburbs. On the preceding evening, a man had followed me. He was troublesome, and to escape impertinence I hurried to my lodgings, and so lightly did I think of the affair, that next day the occurrence was forgotten.

Harley was an early visitor. He was scarcely seated, when a child belonging to the house brought up a sealed billet, which, he said, had been given to him by a fine gentleman, with a request that it should be safely delivered.

Harley appeared astounded; his face flushed; the handwriting was well known to him, and in a flurried voice he addressed me. "You have been but a short time in Canterbury, Ellen, and yet you have made a brilliant conquest."

"I have achieved it unconsciously," I replied in a calm voice.

"Indeed! Know you not, then, the writer of this effusion?"

"I am ignorant of his very existence. Can you tell me his name?"

"It is no doubt detailed fully here;" and he handed me the letter.

"Then pray let me know who my correspondent is?" and I returned the billet.

He broke the seal, and I observed his eyes kindle as he read the note. He closed it again. "Last night, Ellen, you secured a very ardent admirer. Did any person address you in the street?"

"Yes; my walk was interrupted by a tall man who crossed me repeatedly. He spoke to me without obtaining a reply, and obliged me to seek shelter in my lodgings, and followed me to the door."

"Indeed! it were hard that exercise was debarred you by such impertinence, and it shall be looked to. Farewell, Ellen; I shall call early to-morrow. May I keep this billet? and have you no curiosity to know its contents?"

"Retain it, certainly," I replied; "for so little does it interest me, that were it returned, it should be consigned unopened to the fire."

"Once more, farewell, Ellen!" He took my hand in his, kissed me affectionately; and I was left alone.

The evening fell; it was rainy and boisterous. I had some presentiment of evil; the gloomy weather probably induced it, and to divert my melancholy thoughts, I invited the sergeant's wife to tea. Later than usual, Owen came to conduct her home, and I fancied that he appeared thoughtful and dispirited. I concluded that some regimental affair had vexed him, and I regretted it, for the honest Welshman had been kind to me as a father.

Morning came, and morning passed without Harley's customary visit. This unusual absence alarmed me, and my apprehensions were increased, by observing that the sergeant and his wife were visibly dejected, although it was evident that they endeavoured to conceal their uneasiness from me. My inquiries after Harley were evaded, and his absence, when I pressed to know the cause, was excused by saying that he was on duty. But when evening arrived, and my protector came not, my distress became intolerable; and I concluded that some dreadful calamity had befallen my only friend.

I was alone, and weeping bitterly. The time when I might expect a visit had long since passed, and another night of agonizing suspense must be endured. I heard the street-door opened, and hoped it might be Mrs. Owen with some intelligence; I dared anticipate nothing but evil tidings; yet surely any thing was to

be preferred to the torturous uncertainty which Harley's unaccountable absence had occasioned.

A step ascended the stairs softly; I dreaded to look up—no doubt the doomed moment had arrived—I should know the worst—and leaning my head upon the table, I burst into a flood of tears. The late visiter entered, and a man's shadow darkened the opposite wall. I sprang wildly from the chair—it was Harley himself! But, my God, how altered! When last he parted from me, he looked a fortunate and reckless soldier; one who would boldly hew his road through difficulties; and the harder the storm fell, the more buoyant would the spirit rise that should control it. Now his cheek was wan, his eye rayless, he seemed the ruin of himself; one, on whom fortune had exhausted her angry phial—one, from whose bosom hope had fled.

"Ellen," he said, in hollow and unearthly tones, "you have surely heard of my madness! Why ask the question? Evil tidings are quickly carried."

"I have heard nothing Captain Harley."

"Then poor Owen has been true"—he muttered.

"Your absence," I replied, "has made me very wretched; I feared that I had forfeited your regard; had unwittingly offended you, and thus had incurred the misfortune of losing my only protector."

"Protector!" he said, with a laugh that made me shudder. "Ellen, a fool like me, cannot protect himself. I am a ruined man!—worse far—a disgraced soldier."

"Ruined and disgraced!" I repeated in horror. "No, no! ruin may overtake the wisest, but disgrace can never rest upon the name of Harley!"

I fancied a smile lighted his wan countenance, as he continued—

"Alas, Ellen! and you have yet to learn my folly! See—look at this dress! I no longer wear a uniform! From the profession I once prided in, I am expelled. I shall be brought to a court-martial, and my name removed with ignominy, from the list that records the brave! I am now alone upon the earth—who will pity one so fallen!"

"Stop, Captain Harley," I exclaimed, "surely you wrong yourself! Probably you have been rash and imprudent, but I would be sworn the taint of dishonour will never rest upon your name. *What* has happened? *What* have you done?"

"Ellen! before I answer, listen to me, and consider well before you reply. I have told you that I am a ruined man; and fallen as your own fortunes are, mine are still more shattered. Will you with such truth admitted—will you unite your destiny with mine—and all desperate as my future prospects are, will you, Ellen, cling to me through good and evil, and bind your fate to mine!"

Ere he had finished his passionate appeal, I flung myself upon his breast. He swore that for life he would protect me; and in return I plighted him my faith.

"And was the plight kept faithfully?" said O'Connor, interrupting her.

The gipsy's eye flashed fire—

"Faithfully!" she exclaimed, "Ay! with a fidelity that the court dame could only dream of. It was the compact of the heart, and not the mouth. Think you, that the shorn priest, when he unites the hands, can interchange the affections? or that the gold wire which glitters on the finger of the bride, can charm the heart that haply sighs in secret for another—ay, even at the moment when kneeling at the altar, and when she calls on heaven to attest her truth? Have I not seen beauty in its very bud, consigned to a dotard's arms? Have I not seen the wrinkled matron purchase the false homage of the beardless boy?—*Faithfully*, Harley, for five years I followed you in weal and wo; you slept within these arms; and your parting sigh escaped upon this breast. Not even in death did I forget you! for these hands consigned you to the earth, while the fallen brave that lay around were abandoned to the fox and the eagle. In the calm of rustic quietude, in the tempest of war, I never left you. Was this true faith—was this woman's constancy? Yes; though ring, and priest, and all the parade of wedlock were forgotten, the gipsy's love was fixed as the lights of heaven, and

ended where it should do—in the grave of him to whom she had devoted it !”

O'Connor gazed on his singular companion with pity and admiration. The question he had inadvertently asked implied doubt, and recalled the latent ardour of her love. The eye kindled with uncommon brilliancy, as she sprang from the turf she had been resting on; and while repelling a suspicion of her constancy, her whole appearance was noble, commanding, and dramatic. But the allusion to the dead excited softer feelings; gradually she melted into tears, and through deep emotion, her voice became nearly indistinct. It was, however, but a momentary weakness; her firmness returned, and, dashing the tear from her cheek, she muttered—“Pshaw!—this is mere drivelling;” and next minute, resuming her place beside the soldier, she thus continued :

“But Harley’s mishap, though bad enough, was not so ruinous in its consequences as was at first apprehended. I was the unhappy cause. The person who followed me in the street, and sent the billet to my residence, was the senior major of the regiment; and, unfortunately, after he had left me, Harley remonstrated with his superior officer, in a tone that produced an irritating answer. The altercation waxed warmer—became violent—and ended in my protector losing all self-command, and laying his cane upon the shoulders of the major.

At first, this flagrant breach of military subordination, it was believed, could only end in a court-martial. In that case Harley must have been inevitably cashiered. Subsequent inquiry, however, proved that his opponent’s conduct had been culpable, and his language warm and unguarded; and the affair terminated in both withdrawing from the corps, and both disposing of their commissions.

After the first bitterness that parting from a regiment and profession naturally occasioned, Harley appeared to disregard his loss. He was ardently attached to me: he seemed determined to forget the world—he succeeded—and we retired to a beautiful cottage and farm,

which the wreck of his patrimony, and the sale of his commission, had secured us.

It was a wild and lovely home. Situate in the remotest district of a northern county, we had all the varied scene that makes retirement desirable—bold hills, a sparkling lake, heath and copsewood, while the sweetest rivulet wandered round the cottage, in which ever an angler threw a line, or the village maid performed her ablutions. The roses mingled with the thatch, and honeysuckle festooned the green veranda. Even winter did not rob the surrounding scenery of its interest; the heights, far as the eye could range, were covered with snow, and sparkled in the sunshine, while the waters of the lake, in summer so bright and glassy, contrasted with the white mountains, and looked dark as a witch's caldron.

A year passed, and what a year of happiness it was! If there be an era that memory dwells on with delight, it is the time when I possessed an humble cottage and the man I loved. Harley was equally contented; he appeared to have forgotten what he had been. In rural pursuits his leisure was occupied, while his active habits found ample occupation in rambling over the hills, or angling in the many waters that were contiguous to our dwelling. Evening saw him return to his happy home, while I watched for his appearance on the heights, and hurried forth to welcome him. Never did two hearts unite more tenderly. Another and a dearer tie had bound us to each other—a child was born. Oh God! when I think of that it maddens me; remembrance traces again that blissful period. In fancy I see Harley regard his offspring with the first love of a father, while I rapturously leaned over the infant's cot, and as I gazed upon my beauteous boy, little dreamed how bitterly that child would wring my heart.

* * * * *

I was sitting on a rustic bench before the cottage, with my infant on my knee. It was a sweet autumnal evening, and all around was lovely and endearing. Harley was fishing in the lake, and, from time to time, my eyes turned from my laughing boy to seek the other

object of my love, his father. There was a calm and holy quiet in the scene and hour, and I thought my heart felt an unusual lightness. I kissed my baby's lips—and then blessed Heaven that I was parted from the world. The world! what was it to us? Here was a home with all the joys that love and health and competence could give, and not one harassing care to interrupt its sunshine. I heard the wicket open—the terrier lying at my feet sprang forward with an angry growl. I raised my eyes—and Michael's detested face was glaring in hatred and astonishment on mine!

I was horror-stricken—and, in speechless surprise, stole a side glance at my old admirer. His appearance was sadly altered, he was gaunt and haggard, dressed in the tattered clothing of a sailor, with a small bundle across his shoulder, and a murderous bludgeon in his hand. For some moments we both were silent—but at last Michael addressed me.

"So—we have met once more. I have sought you over England in vain—and many a weary mile the search has cost me. No matter; I am more than repaid for all. And have I found the slippery dame again? Ha! Ha! A mother too! Is the child like his father? And he gave a fiendish laugh, and made a step nearer the bench I was resting on. I screamed loudly, and sprang up, and, in my terror, clasped my baby more closely to my bosom. The ruffian continued with a sneer—"A neat cottage, and a full barn-yard, faith! Few gipsy-girls have found so snug a home. Come—let me see the brat. Why! the squire's heir is not tricked out in gayer finery than the bantling of a vagabond! Wilt thou not ask me in, Nell? Methinks this welcome to an old acquaintance is but a sorry one. Wilt thou not offer me a mug of ale? I have walked a weary way to visit you."

I was dreadfully alarmed. There was no one in the cottage; for our domestics, a lad and a woman, were milking in a paddock at some distance from the house. I assumed the appearance of indifference; but, no doubt, an ashy face belied my pretended courage.

"How dare you venture here, Michael? A call from me will bring assistance—and—"

"It will be a loud one," he said, with a fiendish expression of triumphant malice: "No, no, Ellen—I have lain since noon in yonder copse, and watched your keeper to the lake, and your servants to the paddock."

"See ye a man beside the water's edge? Beware of him, Michael: a second meeting may cost you dearer than the first. You cannot have forgotten him."

"No;" said the ruffian coldly, "the man who crosses me, never ceases to be remembered until the injury is avenged. Harley despised and wronged me. He rescued you from my power, for Heaven made him stronger. He spurned me like a reptile—he scorned me like a dog—and, worse offending far, robbed me of your love. The hour of vengeance is at hand—the time of bitter retribution is nigh."

"Villain!—you dare not harm us!"

"That," he returned calmly, "a brief period will discover; I have no time to dally now; I want money, Nell; come, despatch."

I flung him my purse.

"There—for God's sake leave me!"

He lifted the money from the ground, and slowly reckoned it. "Three gold pieces and some silver; the supply was wanted. Farewell, Ellen, for the present. Your friend, I perceive, is turning his footsteps home. Home! Ha! Ha! How long will that home be left him? Your servants, too, are approaching. 'Tis but a hasty visit, Nell, but we will meet ere long.—Adieu!"

Darting a scowl of unextinguishable hatred towards Harley, he turned a parting glance on me. It was the look of a demon; and like a reptile he slipped away among the underwood, and next moment disappeared.

When Harley saw my pale cheeks, he guessed that some untoward event had happened. A short explanation told him the cause of my alarm: and, seizing a loaded gun, he went in pursuit of the gipsy. It was useless to remonstrate with one of his fiery temperament, and I remained in dreadful uncertainty until he returned from a bootless search. Next day every copse

and thicket was examined carefully; but no trace of the ruffian was discovered. A week passed—another succeeded: no doubt, Michael, contented with his subsidy, had disappeared, and dreading Harley's vengeance left the neighbourhood for ever.

The third week ended; an early frost set in; and the first flight of woodcocks were seen on the heaths above the cottage. A day of successful exertion had closed, and Harley retired to his room at an early hour, and was speedily wrapped in the unbroken slumbers which reward the mountain sportsman.

For my part, I felt an unusual reluctance to go to my apartment; I had vague, but fearful apprehensions, and, though I strove to combat what I fancied woman's weakness, Michael haunted my night-dreams, and was seldom absent from my thoughts when waking. I knew him to be a ruthless villain—implacable in hatred—and constant in the purpose of revenge, as the bloodhound to his quarry. He looked, too, like a broken and desperate man, and that would render him doubly dangerous. Still, I endeavoured to banish these forebodings of evil, and rose and looked at the time-piece. The hand pointed to eleven, and commonly an hour before that, our little household were at rest. Indeed, all but myself were so now. I took the candle from the table, and opened the chamber-door softly. Harley lay in that sound and dreamy sleep, which exercise and an easy mind insure. I looked at my baby; there he lay peaceful and happy, for the smile of infancy was curling on his rosy lips. I kissed his forehead gently, lighted the night-lamp on the hearth, and left the apartment again, to ascertain that the doors and casements were fastened, a precaution I had never taken before.

I found all secured, and determined to retire to bed. Once or twice the terrier had growled, and started from his mat; but if any thing moved without, the dog alone could hear it. It was foolish to yield the mastery to uneasy thoughts, and tremble at a ruffian's threats, equally vague and boastful, and which he wanted power and courage to redeem. I extinguished the taper, unclosed a casement looking towards the moun-

tains, and in a few moments the bracing effects of the cold breeze restored my usual tranquillity.

It was a sweet and quiet scene. The little garden stretched downwards to the rivulet, whose waters sparkling in the clear starlight, with a murmuring sound fell over a ledge of rock, and plunged sullenly into a deep basin which their own restless action had worn in the river-bed. On the left, the dark hedges of the orchard shut in the view; while on the right the farm-yard, with its corn stacks and ample pile of fuel for the winter, gave a peculiar character of comfort and plenty to the prospect afforded from the window. I was about to shut the casement, when once more the dog exhibited uneasiness and uttered an impatient whine. Nothing that might disturb his jealousy was visible in the garden, and I threw a careless glance towards the farm-yard. Was it fancy? to the shadow of the barn thrown by the starlight on the grass, that a human being was united! I sprang back. Should I give an alarm and call up Harley? I stole another look; the figure whatever it might have been, had disappeared, and nothing met the eye but the dull mass of shading which the outline of the buildings produced. Why then should I break Harley's rest with a tale of idle apprehension? The shadow might be that of a tree—a passing cloud—ay, or the mere coinage of my own heated imagination, and though under my renewed excitement it would be useless to retire to bed, I decided that it would be unkind to deprive my protector of that tranquil rest which my own fears alone prevented me from sharing. Thus resolved, I secured the lattice carefully and lighted my candle again.

A newspaper—a thing of infrequent recurrence—had reached us late that evening: Harley was sleepy, I engaged with my child, and, in consequence, the cover remained unbroken. I opened it now; reading would while away an hour, and lead me from thoughts that were most harassing. I skimmed over many trifling occurrences lightly, when suddenly, my whole attention was rivetted by a paragraph headed "Dreadful Murder." At the first glance my blood curdled, and I

seemed under a horrid fascination, until I read over the whole detail. The narrative ran briefly thus :

"Two sailors were journeying from a northern seaport ; one, an aged man, just landed from a long voyage, had been paid his arrears of wages, and, with a full purse and large bundle, was proceeding to an inland village to visit his relations there. It would appear that he was not acquainted with the road, for he mentioned in several places where they had stopped for refreshment, that the stranger who accompanied him had been hired as a guide. This man was described to be a person of ill-favoured countenance and shabby exterior.

"On the third day of their journey, the guide led the sailor by a pathway into a thick wood. They were seen to enter it together ; the stranger to leave it alone ; and, in a few hours afterwards, the sailor was discovered in a thicket, with his throat frightfully cut and his purse and bundle gone. Suspicion, of course, fell upon the guide, and instant pursuit was given ; the ruffian was traced and overtaken, and only by a miracle escaped from his followers, dropping the sailor's bundle, and throwing away the jacket he had taken from his victim. In the pocket the dead man's purse was found.

"It was further ascertained that the murderer was a gipsy named Michael Cooper, who had been driven long since from the gang for stabbing a companion in a brawl. Latterly he had led a solitary life, and, as it was believed, one of continued crime. One hundred pounds were now offered for his apprehension, and as he was known to be skulking on the borders of Cumberland, there was little doubt but he would be speedily brought to justice."

Such was the intelligence the newspaper communicated. And had that murderous villain, not six hours since, been within a knife's distance of me and my sweet boy ? I shuddered with horror—a new impulse came over me—that tale of blood had given my fears another bent. I would not be absent from Harley and my child—no, not for a single moment. I put the taper out, and hurried to the sleeping-chamber.

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There lay the father and the child, wrapped in as careless dreaming as if crime and suffering were banished from the world. The calm deep breathing of infancy, contrasted with the stormier sleep of manhood; for Harley in fancy was on the hills, and in low mutterings cheered his grayhounds on the deer. His arm was flung naked above the bed coverings, and, with a woman's pride, I gazed upon its light and sinewy proportions, while on his sleeping brow I could read a character of boldness and decision, that half restored my own. His loaded pistols hung above the chimney-piece, his sabre ready for the master's hand. Surely nothing was to be dreaded here. No assassin would venture on the chamber of a brave man, and he prepared to meet him. I flung my fears to the winds, and in a few minutes was couched at his shoulder and asleep.

I could not have been more than an hour in bed when frightful dreams disturbed me. Of course, waking or sleeping, Michael was the demon that pursued me. I woke in horrible affright. Harley was slumbering carelessly at my side, and I thought my alarm must have been a fantasy. I strove to sleep again—was it nightmare?—my breathing was impeded, and a sickening weight pressed upon my lungs and stopped their exercise. I tried to recall myself to perfect recollection. It was the deep hour of night, the lamp was waning on the hearth, and yet the chamber was bright as if a flood of moonlight filled it. A strange and crackling noise fell on my ear. What could this be? I sprang from the bed, flung aside the curtains, and, heavens and earth! all was in a blaze! and dwelling and farm-yard, although totally unconnected, were breaking into one red flame, and simultaneously in a dozen places. My first acts were to wake my lover, and catch up my sleeping child; a dense and smothering vapour vollied into the room, and when the door was opened, the outward chamber was nearly filled with smoke. It was strange that Harley was so difficult to awake, and for a time after he hardly comprehended the danger. His recollection returned slowly; but when it did, all his

energies burst out. He woke like a person from a trance, dashed aside the fastenings of door and window, and placed me and my child beneath the temporary shelter of a garden shed, carried out sufficient clothing and bed-coverings to secure us from the cold.

It was a sorry sight—the flames raged with ungovernable violence, and what a few hours before was a sweet and comfortable abode, would shortly be a pile of ashes.

We were, as I told you in a solitary and remote situation; and though the fire was speedily discovered, a considerable time elapsed before the nearest of our neighbours could succour us. From all parts they flew to assist, and God knows, how feelingly they sympathised in our calamity! Vigorously all exerted themselves, and all that was saved was considered a sacred trust. Every house was open, and every rural ark placed at our command; and, had it been accepted, pecuniary relief was ready. From the ruins we saved some valuables and clothing. The cattle, by Harley's desperate efforts were secured; and with two hundred pounds in the banker's and the relics of the fire, we commenced the world anew.

* * * * *

We removed to a small village on the coast, and it was surprising with what resolution Harley bore his misfortunes, and submitted to the altered mode of living our reduced means imposed. For six months we exercised the strictest economy; and it was required; for the trifling property saved from the fire was nearly exhausted. It was time that some future mode of obtaining a livelihood was procured, but what course was one like Harley to adopt?—one who from boyhood had enjoyed a competency, and been accustomed to the ease and idleness that mark a soldier's life at home. Were he alone, and obliged to seek a new opening into life, the task would be comparatively easy; but unfortunately, his fortunes were linked to mine, and he was burdened with an infant and its mother. Many plans were devised only to be rejected; nothing was yet determined, when fortune did her worst and left us in a

moment destitute. The banker in whose hands the remnant of our means was lodged failed, and we were completely beggared.

It is impossible to conceive the misery this unexpected calamity occasioned; and it was rendered still more poignant, by the exertions we both made to conceal from the other the anguish that each suffered in secret. A few weeks dragged heavily on, and I observed that many trifles which I knew Harley prized had gradually disappeared, while the few valuables I possessed were privately disposed of to supply the necessaries of our scanty table. At last all was gone; and it was doubtful where to-morrow's food should be obtained. That night Harley pretended to sleep, although his tortured bosom never owned an interval of forgetfulness; while I felt the exquisite suffering, that the destitution of those on whom my very soul centred, must naturally cause.

To witness the concealed agony of a brave man is heart-rending, and I dared not fix my eyes on his. The morning meal—the last we had the means to procure—was over, and Harley rose to take his customary ramble after breakfast.

“Ellen,” he said, as he kissed me with unusual tenderness, “Cheer up, all may yet be well. There is a person in the next town from whom I can procure some money, and before evening I shall be back. Promise that in my absence you will not grieve; for to know that *you* are wretched, can only make *me* more so.”

I tried to smile, and endeavoured to assume the look of happiness, although, God knows, my heart was well-nigh breaking. I was anxious to question him; but, probably to evade what must have been painful explanations, he hastened his departure, and took the road leading to the nearest garrison.

This circumstance partially relieved my apprehensions. There might be some old companion in the regiment quartered in the neighbourhood, and from him Harley would naturally ask a loan. If he succeeded, we might yet escape the dreadful penury that was im-

pending; and as hope is buoyant to the last, I waited confidently for the promised hour of his return.

Evening came, and so did my protector. I flew to him—he caught me to his heart and covered my cheeks with kisses. Pointing to a small basket which he had carried from the town, he desired me to open it. I did so. It contained some excellent provisions, and what for many a month had been a stranger to our table—a flask of wine. We sat down to supper. Harley ate little, but drank like a man oppressed with sorrow and striving to forget. I looked at his face—it was pale, dejected, heart-broken. To rouse him I affected an indifference foreign to my heart.

"Come, love," I said, "how well you have succeeded. Surely this should encourage us. Did you find your friend kind? Did he oblige you without hesitation?"

He smiled, poor soul! I never saw any thing so ghastly.

"Yes, Ellen; he never demurred one moment. And you shall be the banker; ay, and a more faithful one than the last I trusted."

His unearthly laughter startled me, while he threw some twenty pounds into my lap.

"What a supply! George. Take courage; ere this be gone, you and I will have the means of earning a living honestly."

"Indeed, Ellen!"

"Yes—why should young and devoted hearts despair? The old and cowardly may despond; not you and I, George!"

"Well said. See how soundly our baby sleeps. Was not my supply a welcome one?"

"Oh, yes. But—but—"

"Go on, Ellen."

"Forgive me, Harley. How came it?"

"Honestly; ay, honestly, by heaven!"

"You borrowed it?"

"No; it is all mine."

"You make me very wretched. Whence came this money?"

He rose and strode across the chamber, pressed his

hand across his forehead, and with a gesture of despair, pointed to his hat. I sprang forward and seized it; and a gay cockade, with flaunting ribands, fell upon the floor. The secret was told. Harley had procured food and money by enlisting.

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I weary you; details of poverty and distress cannot interest, and I shall rapidly pass over mine. It is enough to say that I followed the fortunes of my protector, and accompanied him to join his regiment. The fear of recognition by any of his former companions annoyed him; but by the use of a die I darkened his features, and altered his appearance so much, that an intimate friend might have passed him in the street. Before summer ended, Harley's military talents were noticed; he became a favourite with his officers, quick promotion succeeded, and in autumn, when our regiment was attached to the expedition of Sir John Moore, the quondam captain of light infantry wore a sergeant's stripes. His military proficiency would have occasioned some suspicion, had he not stated that he had served in the Irish militia—a body from which the smartest soldiers were then supplied to regiments of the line.

In the middle of October we disembarked at Corunna, and after many delays and tedious marches entered Salamanca. To the disasters of that wretched campaign, you, Major O'Connor, are no stranger. It was indeed a tissue of mistakes—operating with feeble allies—acting on false information—advancing to-day, retreating to-morrow—with every thing to harass, and nothing to excite the soldier—until, at last, the ill-fated and ill-planned expedition terminated in a ruinous retreat.

Harley was attached to the light infantry, and, of course, was generally with the rear guard. Yet I never was from him for a night, and notwithstanding the dreadful weather, with want of food and shelter, my child bore all bravely. By accidents unnecessary to detain you with, I amassed a considerable sum of money; and, as we were retiring towards the sea, I began to hope that on our return to England, an humble com-

petency might again be ours. Alas! those whom⁴ loved were never permitted to revisit their fatherland.

After the brilliant cavalry affair at Sahagun, a movement was intended against Soult on the Carrion; but the unwelcome tidings that Napoleon was advancing in person changed the intentions of the English general, and at once determined him to retreat; and on Christmas morning that dreadful scene of misery commenced.

Early next day our sufferings opened with the crossing of the Esla. The river was already rising, and one huge and ill-constructed ferry-boat was the only means by which to pass over a whole division, its baggage, and its camp-followers. The waters were increasing, the rain fell in torrents, the east wind blew with cutting violence, mules kicked, men cursed, and women screamed; all, in short, was noise and disorder. Fortunately a contiguous ford was declared practicable. The infantry and their equipages passed safely; and before the flood rose so high as to bar their passage, the whole column were safe upon the right bank.

The French pursuit was marked by the fiery character of their emperor. He crossed the Carpentanos regardless of obstacles that would have discouraged the boldest, and in a hurricane of sleet and hail passed his army over the Guadarama, by a route declared impracticable even to a mountain peasant. This bold operation, worthy of the conqueror of Italy, was followed up by an immediate advance. The English hussars were sharply attacked upon the Esla by the cavalry of Lefebvre, but they gallantly repulsed them; and the British, with little molestation, retreated through Astorga, taking the Camino Real; while the enemy moving by the road of Ponteferrada, arrived on the 1st at Bernbibre. Why repeat to one who witnessed them, scenes in which he shared? Why?—but to prove how deeply and indelibly every occurrence of that disastrous campaign is imprinted on my heart.

Regardless of the dreadful inclemency of the weather, I had kept as closely to my protector as the presence of the French advance would permit. The year opened on us bivouacked on a dreary heath, and we spent

The night of the 2d in a miserable hovel. I remarked that for the first time, Harley appeared dispirited and fatigued. We ate our wretched meal, and crouched into a corner of the hut that was least exposed to the drifting snow, which the crazy edifice every where admitted. It was a sorry lodging and a gloomy night, and the last too, that Harley and I were fated to pass together in this world!

Morning broke, the column moved, the rear-guard followed, and the dreary march was resumed. The French, as usual, were close to us; but, as yet, they had only worried the patrols with constant alarms, and been contented with picking off any sick men or stragglers who fell behind. The column had just passed Calcabelos, where the two great roads unite, when, encouraged by some appearance of confusion among the piquets, General Colbert suddenly charged with his dragoons, and a sharp affair ensued. The light troops returned to sustain the piquets, and having occupied the vineyards that commanded the roads, opened a shattering fire. The struggle was short but sanguinary, and ended in the repulse of the assailants. Harley, always foremost in a skirmish, involved himself in the hottest combat which took place round the French commander. General Colbert was killed in the *mêlée*, and my protector, shot through the heart, died in the very act of seizing on his prisoner!

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They tore me from the body. Never was an humble soldier more beloved and regretted than my protector. Some of his companions assisted me to lay him in a corner of a vineyard; and, to gratify me, they turned a few turfs with their bayonets, and gave him, at least, the semblance of a grave.

I knew not how I got on afterwards for some days. Harley had hitherto supported my fainting courage, and, while he lived, I did not yield to despair. He was gone, and hope and courage seemed buried in his grave. Still my child remained, and nature prompted me to exert myself for him. For his sake, I did endeavour to escape the horrors of being deserted—and I urged

forward the weary mule, on which all our chances of deliverance rested.

Three days of horrible fatigue and hunger were endured. On the fourth a supply of flour was accidentally obtained, and the lives of my baby and myself preserved. A few hours and our fate would be decided. Preparations for a battle were being made, for Sir John Moore had determined to retreat no further.

Notwithstanding the British were suffering from cold, and wet, and hunger, they fell into position with alacrity. The Minho protected their right, and a ravine separated them from the French, who already in force occupied the heights, and were evidently preparing for an immediate and determined effort. It was made and defeated. Though the enemy attacked furiously, the bayonets of the light companies bore back their daring assailants, and they were repelled from the position with slaughter. Darkness came on—a wild and stormy night, a bare hill, no fire, no food, such was the bivouac of Lugo—such the wretched and cheerless situation of the harassed but unconquerable islanders!

As the morning of the 8th dawned, the British formed line, and prepared coolly for the expected encounter; but it passed over, and the enemy made no hostile movement. The troops were ordered to bivouac as they best could, and, in a short time, a number of rude huts were erected to defend them from the inclemency of the coming night.

But it was not intended to remain longer before Lugo. When darkness hid their retreat, the British filed off silently by the rear. Through a frightful storm of hail and wind, their march was bravely executed—and leaving Lugo and Valmela behind them, they halted at Betanzos on the 10th.

Of my own sufferings it is useless to speak. My escapes from captivity were numerous. Of one you will need no information, for the bridge of Cartoza cannot be forgotten. Let me pause a little, ere I hurry to detail the last calamity that to dwell on would distract a brain, even scathed and callous as my own. Ay!

Well may I execrate that luckless expedition, for endless misery that fatal campaign wrought me!

The halt at Betanzos afforded us a momentary respite from suffering, and hope dawned in many a bosom once more. The hardships of the retreat were almost ended—the sea was near—the fleet were hourly expected. The weather suddenly cleared up and, as if to omen better things, the sun again shone brilliantly. It was strange to observe the magical effect which all this produced; battalions, yesterday scattered and disheartened, rallied round their colours; the army, during the last days of the retreat, at times frightfully insubordinate and disorganised into a mighty wreck, once more resumed its discipline; and the appearance of the brigades, as they defiled in column along the Corunna road, was worthy of that gallant army, which full of life and hope and bravery, had three months since debarked, little suspecting how brief and disastrous the campaign would be.

The following nights were passed in comparative tranquillity. I slept in the village of Pallavio; and though my accommodations were most wretched, the amended state of the weather and a feeling that I was secure, made me rest soundly as one left alone in the world could hope to do. My boy, whose fading cheek gave silent but certain indications that his feeble strength was unequal to the privations and fatigue he had encountered, appeared to rally unexpectedly; and it was now scarcely doubtful but he would survive and revisit his fatherland. That morning I had obtained food of a better description than we had for some time seen, and I prepared a comfortable meal. When it was ready, I hesitated almost to awake my baby, his sleep seemed so deep and so refreshing. I looked at his sweet countenance as he lay slumbering on his father's cloak. How like the lost one in every lineament! I gazed until my heart softened, and a flood of tears relieved the sullen agony I had hitherto sustained;—love for the living and sorrow for the dead melted my withered spirit, and again I became a woman.

I set out with some other stragglers for Corunna. As

usual, I fixed my infant in a pannier on the mule, and the valuables I had saved with such difficulty were deposited in the other basket. A sum of money, in English gold, I had concealed effectually on my person. It was a lovely morning for the season of the year; the sky of summer-blue was cloudless; my heart felt as if it had lost a portion of its weight, and as I urged the mule on, I occupied my thoughts in devising plans for the future settlement of my boy and myself when we should have landed safely in England. I looked into the pannier—the child was sleeping, and in sleep how like his gallant father! The sun beamed on his eyes—I stooped to arrange the coverings of the basket. Suddenly the ground rocked—a dense mass of black ashes rose to the sky from the heights behind, and with a tremendous crash, as if occasioned by the ruin of a world, the air was darkened—the earth shook—more I know not. I was struck down upon my face, and lay where I fell in a state of total insensibility, how long I cannot guess.

I woke as from a dream—it was already twilight—two dead soldiers were stretched at my side, and I could not for a considerable time remember where I was. With restored memory, my first care was to find my child. Where was he?—the mule—the boy? Oh God! gone—gone! lost—irrecoverably lost!

* * * * *

I wandered in a state of madness, but chance directed me to the right path. Day and night I roamed through herds of camp followers—but no tidings of the lost one. On came the French—the fleet entered the bay—the attack ensued, and Moore, like Nelson, fell in victory. Of all these occurrences I know nothing; for while the contest was raging before Corunna, I was rambling like a maniac over the contiguous country, seeking that darling object, before whom the riches of the earth were but a dross.

How I escaped death, captivity, and insult, I cannot even conjecture. I remember fainting on the beach, and when I recovered, found myself with many a widowed female less wretched, crowded in a transport;

and the harbour of Corunna fading from my sight in the haze of a winter evening. I learned afterwards that my escape was purely accidental. A drunken comrade of poor Harley recognised me where I lay, and flung me into a boat; and without any exertion of my own, I was saved, while hundreds were abandoned."

Just then, O'Connor's pretty guide entered the copse, and the gipsy rose and met her. A few whispered sentences conveyed the intelligence she brought; the girl immediately retired, and Ellen rejoined the soldier.

"We are likely to be interrupted," she said, "and I fear my wretched memoir must remain, for the present, unfinished. Has it interest enough to tempt you to the churchyard at midnight? You march to-morrow, and I should wish to bid you farewell."

O'Connor was deeply attentive while the gipsy told her harrowing adventures. He made a feeble effort at hilarity, and with a forced smile accepted her invitation to another interview.

"Farewell, Ellen. At midnight we meet again."

She pointed out the road to the village, joined the young gipsy who waited for her at a short distance, and gliding into the thicket left the soldier once more alone.

O'Connor turned his footsteps towards the village, pondering, as he crossed the forest, on the late eventful occurrences in his own life; and marvelling at the strange vicissitudes that had attended the stormy career of his wild and singular acquaintance.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MESS-TABLE.

PRINCE HENRY. We must all to the wars.

1st Part, HENRY IV.

FALSTAFF. Now comes in the sweetest morsel of the night.

Ibid.

WHEN O'Connor returned to the Grayhound he found his companions sitting at their wine. Phillips was not there; his absence was a relief: and though little inclined to share the revelry of the mess-table, still to prevent his unusual absence from dinner being remarked, and while the tedious hours away that must intervene before his appointed interview in the churchyard, he entered the room, and took his customary place. The senior captain, a countryman of his own, presided; and judging from the joviality of the merry group that surrounded him, O'Brien had circulated the bottle gallantly.

Unlike Phillips, the worthy president was in wild excitement at the certainty of a move to the Peninsula; and the sparkling eyes and cheerful countenances of all around, told that there was no heart there that did not beat with a soldier's ardour, hailing the arrival of the moment when they should meet a brave and chivalrous foe. O'Connor, with a leader's pride, remarked this martial enthusiasm. With one or two exceptions, all these had just entered on their military careers, with the buoyancy of hope which warms the young adventurer, when he first bursts upon the world and sees nothing in his path but success. O'Brien was an old and trusty companion of Major O'Connor; and though several years older than his friend, was junior to him in rank, and secondary far in military reputation; for

he had neither equal talents, nor had he possessed them, that opportunity for their display, which had fallen to his more fortunate countryman. But O'Brien was a brave and single-hearted soldier. He had not a particle of envy in his heart; he loved the major with honest affection; he looked at his well-earned fame with national pride; and while he despised Phillips in his soul, O'Connor, according to his estimation, was the *beau idéal* of what a soldier should be. The appearance of the gallant captain was every inch Milesian. He was a tall, muscular, jovial-looking fellow; one, as he expressed it himself, who "took all as the Lord sent it, and did not care a brass button for what the morrow brought." Shrewd, witty, and sarcastic, he seized on the ridiculous at once. Ardent in his likings and antipathies, he was indifferent in expressing his opinions of men and things as far as regarded consequences. Vain of his country to absurdity, he adopted a phraseology and mannerism so peculiar, as to entirely prohibit any possibility of mistake, touching his being a native of the emerald island.

"I am glad to see you," was his address to the major on his entrance. "I feared that you were going to leave us to find our own way to the Douro. We have lost Phillips, I hear. We have lost a nice man certainly, and the dragoons have got one. Well, the Lord's will be done; and if he was twice as valuable, they are welcome to him; for he was only thrown away on us. Fill your glass, Tom, and let's hear of our acquaintances who else has hopped the twig."

The young ensign it appeared, had been reading the monthly obituary from the last army list that had been just received, when O'Connor's entrance interrupted him, and he resumed his task.

"Augustus Koffmann, King's German Legion—Thomas Jones, 4th Garrison Battalion—Peter Fogarty, half-pay Irish Militia."

The president struck the table with his broad hand and exclaimed with strong emotion—

"Holy Saint Patrick! and has honest Peter gone to look after his patients at last?"

"Did you know him Pat?" inquired Lieut. Perceval.

"Know him?" responded Captain O'Brien; "Ah! God rest ye, Peter; you were my first counsellor when I left college for my present Christian-like profession. You're gone; and a better cribbage-player never pegged a game, nor fairer drinker stretched calf-skin below mahogany."

"Was he clever in his profession?" inquired the assistant-surgeon, in broad Scotch.

"Clever? Oh, it's he that was. I never knew one of your calling that could hold a candle to Peter Fogarty."

"He made wonderful cures, I suppose?" said Sandy Anderson.

"Cures!" exclaimed Captain O'Brien; "I have known him remove a complicated disease of head, heart, and stomach, without drug or draught, but a teaspoonful of tooth-powder."

"Indeed!" said the major smiling, "Why Sandy himself could not pretend to match Mr. Fogarty."

"Hoot, man; that's not to be believed!"

"It is true, however, Sandy," replied the captain. "George, order a grilled bone, and, during the broiling, I'll tell you the story. Heigh-ho! how fast time flies. Then was I like a young bear, with my troubles all before me. Come, boys; fill to the memory of poor Peter; and though I must necessarily record some portion of my own history and virtues, if modesty does not choke me, I'll give you the detail."

The president was obeyed, a full and solemn bumper was drunk to the honour of the departed doctor, and Captain O'Brien thus proceeded:

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them, should be—to forswear thin potations, and addict themselves to sack.

2d Part, HENRY IV.

DOCTOR. The heart is sorely charged.

GENT. I would not have such a heart in my bosom, for the dignity of the whole body.

DOCTOR. Well—well—well.

GENT. Pray God it be, sir.

DOCTOR. This disease is beyond my practice.

MACBETH.

AN! God be with you old Trinity. Green is your memory, and fondly do I recall the merry days and jovial nights I passed within your honoured precincts. You were then a seat of learning fit for a prince, and take you all in all, a pattern for colleges at large. In many a stiff hurling-match and heavy drink have I shared with as true Corinthians, as ever slept upon the guard-bed of watch-house, or tossed a bailliff in a blanket. Companions of my youth—where are they now? Stretched beneath the sward of some half-forgotten field, or gone to their account by the certain, though less sudden maladies, to which the flesh is heir.

My father was a true Milesian. He had a long pedigree and a light purse, for hounds and horses were "the spoil" of him. He lived as a gentleman should live; and died after a grand-jury dinner, drinking Baron Botherem to a stand-still, although the worthy justice could carry off his fourth bottle, and sentence a malefactor next morning, as steadily as a Christian judge should do.

Two sons blessed my father's bed, of whom the younger was my unworthy self. We were both destined for professions, and Father Prendergast was our preceptor. Tom, as my brother was named, progressed marvelously in learning; while I, alas! was but a sorry disciple, although the honest churchman followed Solomon's directions to the letter, and whatever timber might be wanting at Killbrannagher, upon my conscience, there was no scarcity of birch. Notwithstanding unfavourable reports, my father fancied I had talents, and it was his pleasure to destine me for the bar. The bar, Michael Prendergast opined I would in good time reach, and that, too, by a less expensive road than the one proposed by my sire—concluding his observations with, "Never mind; push him, the devil, into college any how. Bigger boobies have cut a figure there before now."

Well! the point was carried; Tom and I entered the university, and we were consigned to the care of Doctor Blundell, as dry a professor as ever produced a thesis. Our Gamaliel was a short, stout, bullet-headed dwarf, his face so fat, and cheeks so flaccid, that *en profile*, no nose was visible, and it was necessary for him to give, at least, "a quarter front," before the organ of smell could be discovered. His figure was in good keeping; the body resembled a porter-butt on a reduced scale, and was mounted on two thick props, whose extreme curvature obtained for the professor the *sobriquet* of "parenthesis." Such was the learned Theban, to whom the hopes of the O'Briens were intrusted.


Tom from the very start, promised to be a genius of the first order; while my career, I lament to say, was rather bustling than brilliant. Indeed, Doctor Blundell declared we were, in every respect, opposite as the Antipodes. I never could comprehend the beauty of a "sorites;" mathematics were altogether beyond my reach; astronomy, in my opinion, only fitted for a fortune-teller; while as to mechanic powers, the only one I ever meddled with was the screw, or an occasional

exercise of the lever on the person of a dun or watchman.

Indeed the honest professor's estimate of character was correct, for no brothers were ever more dissimilar: Tom would lose his rest to prove that crab-apples did not grow upon a cherry-tree, and fret himself into a fever, to discover the parallax of a star. No wonder he was a first-class premium-man, and bore college "honours thick upon him." Yet there were people in the world who considered him little better than a fool,—forgetting, that to be a philosopher a man must be dirty and eccentric. Certainly Tom had been frequently encountered in the streets with a consequential garment missing; and he puzzled a country postmaster, by requiring letters after forgetting his own name. As to his meals, they were at times totally forgotten; and in his annual migrations to and from the university, he was usually consigned to the custody of a fellow-traveller, or handed with a half-crown to the guard, and a request that he should be delivered as addressed.

It was fortunate that Tom's virtues and acquirements acted as a set-off against my delinquency. Yet my career was not unnoticed, and I contrived to obtain the marked attention of my superiors. More than once I was admitted to a conference with the board, and on account, I suppose, of the insalubrity of the city, was recommended by those worthy personages country air for a term of six months; and that too so pressingly, that no demurrer on my part would be listened to.

Three years passed over, when one evening, returning from a tavern dinner, a row was kicked up at the gate, and a desperate assault and battery ensued. A stupid citizen knocked his head against a blackthorn stick, and the accident was so awkward as to occasion a fracture of the occiput, and give the coroner the trouble of empannelling a jury, to inquire into the cause of the same. The affair occasioned a sensation, and a score of us unfortunates were summoned before the board. As the defunct was unhappily a common-councilman, the authorities were loud in their denunciations. The newspapers called us Mohawks and mur-



derers : some said we should be hanged, while others more mercifully declared that the punishment should be mitigated to transportation. In this dilemma, Doctor Blundell, when transmitting the quarter note, apprised my father of the occurrence, "assured him that all hope of my ever doing good was desperate, and to evade the gallows, which he proved to a demonstration must be my end, he recommended that I should be permitted to follow my own bent, and enter the cut-throat profession, for which it was *a sequitur* that nature had intended me." Next post a letter from my father was received. He "concurred with the learned Professor; affectionately informed me that I was at liberty to go to the devil as I pleased, sent me some money, and intimated that he had applied for a commission in the militia." This was as it should be; his application was successful, and in a few days I was one of the fraternity of the sword, and duly gazetted to the — regiment.

The corps I was attached to, was at that time encamped at Leighlinstown, four or five miles from the capital; and, as in duty bound, I set out next morning to visit my commanding officer in proper form.

My father had an old acquaintance in the corps, to whose protection I was, by the letter, regularly committed. Of course it was to him that I applied for an introduction to Colonel Mahony. I was graciously received by my patron, presented in due form to the commander, and until I could obtain accommodations, hospitality invited, *pro. tem.*, to take up my quarters in a corner of the hovel, which Peter Fogarty—as my patron was called—had constructed for his abiding-place, while remaining in the field.

Peter was a singular personage, a strange, shrewd sort of oddity, and, in his own way, an excellent fellow. He had been bred an apothecary, married a woman who ran away, failed in business, found favour in the colonel's sight, and, through his interest, when the militia was embodied, obtained the surgeoncy of the regiment to which I had been just gazetted.

Peter Fogarty's outward man was not remarkably attractive. He was short and corpulent, with a bull-

neck and square shoulders, a small and twinkling gray eye, and nose snubbed and efflorescent, as the nose of a man delighting in whisky punch should be. Peter was fond of a race or cock-fight, would go twenty miles to be present at a duel, loved a rubber of whist dearly, but cribbage was his delight, cribbage was the road to his affections, and I soon discovered it.

I mentioned that my regiment was under canvass when I joined, and formed a part of some six or seven thousand men, who, pending the explosion of "ninety-eight," were encamped in the vicinity of the metropolis. The officers were generally provided with tents, but some of them had erected temporary habitations, and among the number were Colonel Mahony and his medical adviser. Indeed it was absolutely necessary that Peter's domicile should be contiguous to the commander's. From conjugal regard, the lady had accompanied the colonel to the field, although her health was but indifferent; and the extreme delicacy of her constitution rendered the frequent attendance of Doctor Fogarty indispensable.

Peter's habitation was a wooden hut; one end, screened from vulgar gaze by an old blanket, formed his dormitory, while the other corner was curtained off for me. The centre was used for all the purposes of the body politic. There our *déjeûné* was laid; there, if a sick officer applied, the prescription was written; there, when dinner ended and we left the mess-tent, on a small deal table the cribbage-board was found—and better still, an abundant supply of the *matériel* for fabricating that pleasant beverage, which Peter averred to be both safe and wholesome, to wit—whisky punch—was duly paraded for our refreshment.

As the world went, Peter Fogarty should have been a happy man. His means were equal to his expenditure, his wife had run away, and his professional cares were trifling. "The villains," as he termed his "charge of foot," were healthy; their principal infirmity being corns; a disease to which they were obnoxious, from a majority of the corps, prior to their enlistment, having considered shoes a superfluity. Yet Peter had his own

troubles; for below, as schoolmen declare, there is no happiness without alloy. Woman, that source of evil, was his bane: and, as in the fulness of his heart he would acknowledge after his sixth tumbler—"but for Mrs. Mahony, he would be as happy as the day was long."

Mrs. Mahony had been for many years a wife, but, unhappily, as yet had never been made a mother. The colonel was anxious for an heir. Hopes were frequently excited, and they were as often deferred, until the heart was sick. Yet why should Mrs. Mahony despond? her grandmother had a son at fifty-two; she was but forty-seven, and why should she despair?

All this, however, was ruinous to the peace of Doctor Fogarty. The least alarm in the day, the slightest movement after night, agitated his interesting patient. Ether had often failed; and even a teaspoonful of brandy at times would hardly prove a sedative. These unfortunate attacks generally took place at an advanced period of the evening, and of course Peter was required. Then the ill-starred practitioner was invariably at ~~what~~ or cribbage—the colonel's bat-man, a foster-brother of the lady, would be despatched to our wooden habitation, and, with nine scored, and the odd trick actually in his hand, the unhappy doctor has been obliged to abandon his own fortunes, for the desperate chance of endeavouring to continue the ancient lineage of the Mahonys.

Had success crowned his efforts, Peter was not the man to repine. In the triumph of his art, his toils and labours would have found their reward. But, alas! matters daily became more unpromising; and, like the wolf-cry, Mrs. Mahony's ceased to interest or alarm. Peter Fogarty, though a good Catholic, was nearly driven to desperation—and before he cut his first honour, he usually prayed from the bottom of his soul for Mrs. Mahony's repose temporal and eternal, and the sooner her beatitude was completed, he as a Christian man opined would be all the better.

It was for the season a dark and blustering night. More than one tent-pole had given way—pegs and cords

were tried and found wanting, and in the joy of his heart my host congratulated himself and me on the stability of our wooden dwelling. The last batch of whisky was inimitable; and so said the doctor, after submitting the liquor to a fair test of six tumblers. The cards were decidedly in his favour—fortune smiled upon him every cut—and since the night his wife had bolted, he never had been so happy. It was just ten—the deal was mine—but Peter's cards were beautiful. Suddenly a hurried foot approached the door. Peter remarked it. "It's the lobsters after all—I knew the devil would not fail me." Knock—knock—"Come in." It was not the lobsters, but Murty Currigan, the colonel's bat-man. The doctor looked dark as Erebus—the bat-man as if he had been running for his life. The former coughed to conceal vexation. "Ha, ha—hum;—any thing wrong?"

"Wrong! You may say that—the mistress is dying," responded Murty.

"Dying!—What the devil would make her die?" said the doctor.

"Sorra one o'me knows," returned the bat-man.

Now Murty Currigan being deaf, save when Peter Fogarty elevated his voice to an extraordinary pitch, his remarks touching the diagnostics of his mistress's disease, were lost upon the bothered* bat-man.

"What's the matter with her now?"

"It's a kind of pain about her heart."

"Pish!" said the doctor testily, "That's a Connaught symptom for a sprained ankle. Any thing else?"

"Her head's dizzy; and she's at times astray," replied the lady's foster-brother.

"Humph! so should mine be after a pint of brandy."

"She's as wake as a cat"—quoth the envoy. "She can't move without help."

"Seldom people can when they're regularly smothered"—said the leech.

"She has a sort of a twisting in her stomach," added the fosterer.

* *Anglice*, deaf.

The doctor's patience gave way. "Arrah, badahust, ye ommadawn!" Would you give her as many ailments as would kill a priest? Off with ye, Murty. Tell them to keep her quiet, and come back in half an hour, and tell me how she is." The bat-man vanished. "She'll be fast asleep then, and we'll not be troubled with her capers. Come—I lead. Fifteen two—fifteen four—a pair make six—and a pair make eight;" and on he went with the jargon of the game.

Now, though the honest doctor counted with some confidence on sleep, that "sweet mediciner," abating the complicated diseases with which Mrs. Mahony was afflicted, still he had sore misgivings to disturb him, and these could occasionally be detected, from his confused allusions to the patient and the game.

"Stop, Pat; let me cut. I couldn't have made more of that hand, unless we played the double flush. Your father and I always flushed. Jasus! I wonder what's come over the woman! Every night smothered; and then me tattered out, wet or dry. Asy, Patt—you're pegging too fast; let me see what I have got. Look if it was once or twice a week—but every night nothing but, 'Run for Doctor Fogarty!' I wish she was safe in heaven, or in the county Clare, for my heart's fairly broke. Shuffle them, man—I cut. Give me the bottle; devil a drop of spirits I put in my tumbler, that woman, bad luck to her, bothered me so."

All this time I observed that no preparatory steps were taken for the composition of the healing draught, for which the fosterer had been directed to return; and I hinted, that as the hospital tent was at some distance, the sooner Peter started for his "galeenicals" the better. My remark appeared to astonish the worthy man, for he laid down his cards, and looked at me with a broad stare.

"The hospital tent! It is to go a long half-mile, and a storm raging that would blow the buttons off my jacket! Arrah, what a *gommouget* ye take me for,

* *Anglice*, "Silence, you idiot!"

† *Anglice*, a simpleton.

Pat! And yet, blessed Virgin! if Murty comes again, what am I to do with him? Was there ever a dacent practitioner so teased by an ould besom as myself, Peter Fogarty? If I had but some simple for her. Oh, murder! not a squig of physick in the house, unless you have it."

I shook my head.

"Death an nouns! have ye nothing—salts, senna, cinnamon—rhubarb, scamony, magnesia?"

I nodded a negative.

"Have you no neglected draught; nothing in the shape of powder?"

"Nothing," I replied, "but tooth-powder."

"Phew!" and Peter whistled—"Beautiful! and by the best of luck I have a bottle."

Up he rose, bolted for a moment behind the blanket, and speedily reappeared with a small phial. In it he deposited a spoonful of my dentifrice, filled it from the kettle, and shook it, as he said, "*Secundum artem.*" The infusion produced a liquid of bright pink, with an aromatic odour; and Peter, having submitted the mixture to the double test of taste and smell, was loud in his admiration.

"Beautiful!" he exclaimed. "I have spent a winter's morning over the mortar, and not produced a more palatable anodyne. Don't cut yet—I'll just label the bottle, and then for the flats." Accordingly, he inscribed upon a slip of paper, the following directions for the use of his new-invented julep, and affixed them carefully to the potion. "*A teaspoonful of the mixture to be taken every half hour until the patient is relieved—shaking the bottle. For Mrs. Mahony.*"

It was fortunate for Peter that his nostrum was in readiness. Before he had dealt a second hand, a loud tap at the door announced the return of the fosterer; and bad as Murty's first report was, his second bulletin was infinitely more alarming.

"Well—is she better?"

"Better?" repeated the fosterer with a wild stare.

"Ay—better!" returned the physician in a tone of voice that mimicked Murty's like an echo.

"Arrah! she never was bad till now," said the fosterer. "Ye can't tell a word she says, good or bad, and she wouldn't know her own maid from the black drummer."

"Ah! regularly sewed up. Here," and he handed him the bottle, "mind the directions; can ye read?"

"If I can't, sure Biddy Toole can."

"Away with ye then, every moment you lose may be fatal; bathe her feet and shake the bottle, and be sure ye tell me how she is—early in the morning."

"Any thing else, doctor?"

"Nothing—only don't let her get cold, if ye can help it, and now run ye devil!"

Murty made his salaam and vanished; and soon after, Peter and I retired to our respective cribs.

Betimes next morning, the bothered bat-man reported that his lady was convalescent; and after breakfast, the doctor departed to his hospital, and I to attend a garri-son parade.

On my return, as captain of the day, it was necessary for me to call upon my commanding officer, and accordingly I repaired to the wooden erection, in which Colonel Mahony had deposited his household gods. After being paraded through a sort of anteroom, I found the commander inditing an epistle upon a three-legged table, before a port-hole which it was his pleasure to call a window, while divers cloths and coverlets were suspended from a line stretched across the apartment, and excluded from the gaze of vulgar eyes "the lady of his love." The commander having duly apologised for detaining me a few moments while he concluded his letter, pointed to a camp-stool—and I seated myself and took up the Evening Post. But the newspaper was unheeded—voices behind the curtain told that there were others in the chamber of state; and in the speakers I easily recognised Peter and his patient, Mrs. Manony, while a feeble piano in a flat key, thus continued:

"Yes, doctor, I will ever acknowledge that under Providence, I owe my life to you. The first spoonful gave relief, and the second acted like a charm."

"Indeed! Ha!—hem!—hem! Allow me: pulse full—a *leetle* feverish—must keep very quiet."

"But, dear Mr. Fogarty, I must, you say, be very careful to avoid cold. No doubt the medicine I took last night with such happy effect was very powerful?"

"Most powerful, madam," replied the leech with unblushing effrontery. "The arcana of pharmaceuticals could not afford a more effective combination."

"God bless me!" ejaculated the lady, "but for it, I should have been dead."—

"As Julius Cæsar, madam," responded the doctor, with a solemn cough.

"I have been reflecting on your advice, doctor. These constant alarms are too much for my nervous sensibility. Would you believe it, ether and a dessert-spoonful of brandy had no effect upon me last night?"

"Indeed!—Hem!—hem!"

"Ay, doctor, you may well shake your head. I would not fret the poor dear colonel; but—"

"I know your feelings, and they do honour to your heart, madam."

"Well, as I was saying, doctor, to leave Colonel Mahony—"

"Madam," returned the false physician, "I can appreciate the strength of your attachment; but there are other and important considerations:" and Peter dropped his voice to a half-whisper, that prevented me from hearing any thing beyond detached words. "Delicate situation—hopes of an honourable house—colonel's partiality for children—native air—happy result—bark and sea bathing." And before the commander had finished his despatch the villain Peter, under false hopes, had persuaded the colonel's helpmate to bundle off to Clare, "by easy stages." Whether she carried a bottle of the pink tincture in the carriage, I forget; but, I presume, that she would hardly, when there was balm in Gilead, depart without an extensive supply.

Time passed—and four years after I had left the militia, and volunteered to the line, I had occasion to run up to London, and there encountered my old commander in the Strand. He was a friendly little fellow,

and expressed great pleasure at our meeting. I remarked that he was habited in deep mourning; and when I inquired for Mrs. Mahony, he sighed heavily, shook his head, and informed me that he had buried her a month before in Cheltenham.

"Ah! my dear O'Brien. It was a black day when I was persuaded to leave home. Fogarty was the only man that understood poor dear Mrs. Mahony's constitution. You may remember when we lay in Leighlinstown camp, the desperate attack she had. You and Peter were hutted together at the time." I nodded an affirmative. "Just such another fit carried her off at Cheltenham. Had Peter Fogarty been near us, I should not now be a disconsolate widower as I am, for Biddy Mahony would have been alive."

We dined together at the Blue Posts in Cork-street. "Sorrow is dry," and the commander was in trouble. At twelve I conveyed him to his lodgings in a hackney-coach; and on our way home, as well as I could understand him—for there was "a ripple" in his delivery—he did nothing but lament, in poor dear Mrs. Mahony's last attack, the absence of Peter and his "pink tincture."

CHAPTER X.

THE GIPSY'S STORY CONTINUED.

Hark ! to the hurried question of despair ?

"Where is my child ?"—an echo answers—"Where ?"

BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

MACBETH.

Is he despatched ?

MURDERER. My lord, his throat is cut, that I did for him.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE night wore on—and in the merry group who occupied the parlour of the Grayhound there was but one heavy heart, and that was the commander's. For him there was no flavour in the wine, no point in the repartee that "set the table in a roar," and he waited impatiently for the hour of meeting in the churchyard, to listen to a narrative of suffering far more congenial to his present mood, than the reckless gayety of the young spirits who surrounded him. Before midnight he stole from his companions unobserved, and reached the trysting-place unnoticed. Ellen was not yet come ; but ere the first quarter chimed, a figure glided round a buttress of the dark building, and the gipsy joined him under the appointed lime-tree.

"True to your engagement, Ellen," said the soldier ; "but is not this a dull place to select for midnight as-signations ?"

"Ay—and for the confession of a deed of blood !" said the gipsy in a low tone of voice. "To me there is something associated with this lonely cemetery that is sacred. Here, the ashes of the being whom I most loved, are reposing ; for in a remote corner of this burial-ground my mother was interred ; and I take a melancholy pleasure in visiting her grave when the

coward fears of the villagers leave the domain of the dead all mine own. Were there aught to fear from the departed, you and I should hesitate to venture on their dwelling, for both of us have blood upon our souls."

"Yes, Ellen, but if blood has been unhappily shed by me, it was spilt in fair and honourable warfare."

"Ay—ay—there lies the fanciful distinction. Your homicides were legalised by the pleasure of some half dozen sanguinary despots. You smote the brave, I only sped the felon. But—to my tale—and it shall be a brief one:

The remnant of the ill-fated expedition sailed for the shores of Britain. What proportion returned I know not; but were it ascertained how many perished in the field, died of fatigue, or were transferred to a French prison, the casualties of that gallant army must have been enormous. Many an afflicted family sorrowed for that disastrous campaign—many a wife and mother were "left lamenting"—but where had any been so unmercifully visited as myself? I left my native land, the beloved one of a brave man. My boy—the loveliest that ever gladdened the heart of a doting mother! The brave was sleeping on the field he died on. The boy—oh, God! where was he? My brain burns when I ponder on his unknown fate. Was he dead? and did the child of my heart heave his last sigh on any pillow but his mother's bosom? Was he living—and if alive—what? The thought was horrible—the menial of a foreigner—the drudge of some bloated monk—the serf of a Spanish peasant—a slave!—

"Nay, the bondsman of a slave."

God! what is death to such miserable uncertainty? What the freedom of a disembodied spirit to the grovelling existence of a bondsman's thrall?

* * * * *

I landed a lone and spirit-broken wretch. Whither to direct my steps I knew not—whither I cared not; the world was all before me, and that world had not an object that could interest me now. If ever there was a withered heart, surely it was one like mine—one, on

whom misery had wrought its worst—one, to whom pain and pleasure were but names.

I procured an humble lodging, and there for several days brooded in gloomy solitude over my destitution. Gradually, however, my sorrow calmed down; and when I could think with some composure on my future mode of life, I determined to return to the vicarage, throw myself again upon Mr. Howard's pity, and, if he permitted it, wear out my few and evil days under the roof of my excellent protector.

When I disembarked I had little clothing left beyond the dress I wore, and it was necessary to procure a supply. Accordingly on the fourth evening, I left my lodgings for the first time, to purchase a decent outfit. The streets were crowded with drunken soldiers, who, availing themselves of the temporary license granted to their recent sufferings, with the proverbial recklessness of men "escaped from the slaughter," forgot in coarse debauchery their past hardships and lost companions. I was frequently accosted by these wanderers as I passed along; but having succeeded in providing the articles I required, I turned my footsteps homeward. One person, an old Jew, had crossed me more than once. In the shops that I entered, he, too, appeared to have business to transact; and if he did not follow me in, I was certain to find him lounging near the door. Yet this was not very remarkable. Multitudes of Israelites had flocked to Portsmouth, in expectation of buying up the plunder of the campaign; or obtaining, for worthless considerations, from the unwary, the arrears of pay which had been given them on their landing.

At the door of the lodging-house there was a temporary delay when I knocked. I stood beneath a lamp that was suspended directly above me, and, throwing aside the mantle I had hitherto wrapped closely over my face, looked carelessly around. Immediately before me the Jew was standing. The lane was narrow—he was in the shade—I in the full glare of lamp-light. More than the mere outline of his figure could not be discerned, while my features were distinctly revealed

to his observation. I heard a foot descend the stairs—the door opened—and I turned in. “It is herself, by heaven!” ejaculated a low and hollow voice. I stopped and looked quickly round—the speaker was gone, a shadow on the opposite wall floated past, and the lane was to all appearance without a living being but myself.

This last occurrence was alarming; it was quite unaccountable why the old Jew should follow, and, to judge from his exclamation, recognise me as he did. I felt a secret misgiving, and determined to hasten my departure. On inquiry, I learned that every conveyance was engaged by sick and wounded officers, hastening to revisit their respective homes. But to stay longer in Portsmouth I considered dangerous; and I resolved to proceed next morning, and beg an asylum from the worthy man, whose house I had once so unceremoniously abandoned. I made up my small wardrobe in a bundle, secured my money carefully, bade my hostess farewell, and at sunrise had cleared the streets of Portsmouth, and taken the road to the still-loved village that contained the ashes of my mother.

For two days I journeyed prosperously; nothing of any moment occurred. All day I kept the road, and at night rested in some hamlet or farm-house. I thought it safer to avoid the towns, and although I had nothing whose loss I regarded now, my courage was sunken and my once proud spirit gone. I dreaded some nameless calamity—I feared I could not tell what—life to me was valueless, and yet there was a coward sinking of the heart, that even when rich in worldly happiness I had never felt before. No wonder that in this depressed and nervous temperament, I looked suspiciously at objects, which under other feelings I should have passed by without remark; and when on the second evening of my journey, a tax-cart of peculiar colour, driven by a man wrapped closely in a huge riding-coat, passed me as it had done on the preceding evening, I took alarm at the singular precision with which the stranger adapted his movements to mine, and only felt at ease, when I reached the termination of my wayfaring, and rested at the village alehouse for the night.

Two days more and my labours would be ended and, as I hoped, a quiet asylum gained. I rose early and resumed my journey with more alacrity than I had hitherto exhibited; miles were accomplished, and though fatigued by unusual exertion, I persevered and still pressed forward. Evening found me on the verge of a large and dreary moor, and I half determined to turn back and rest for the night in the last hamlet I had passed, and not attempt traversing what, in the haze of evening, appeared a boundless wilderness. But to retrograde some distance would only leave more to be achieved to-morrow—and summoning resolution, I resolved at all hazards, to cross the waste, and rest in the village beyond it. I was alone—the path was wild and solitary—what then? my sex would protect me from all but the most profligate, and in an humble pedestrian like me, the robber would find nothing to excite his cupidity.

I walked briskly on, and anxious to reach my resting-place, redoubled exertions which fatigue had before abated. More than a mile of the lonely waste was passed and nothing had occurred to alarm me; for I had seen but one straggling wood-cutter, and not a human habitation was visible. It was fortunately a bright night, for the moon was nearly full. Still I struggled onward, cheered by the thought that every step brought me nearer to a place of safety.

The road—if a passage over moorland, marked on the barren sward by the wheel-tracks of the few vehicles that traversed it, could be so termed—was intersected by another. Three paths lay before me, and which of them should I select? There was a shattered finger-post at the union of these roads, but time and weather had so far obliterated its directions, that by the waning moonlight it was quite impossible to glean any information wherewith to remove my uncertainty. After a momentary pause I took the path before me. As I proceeded, it gradually inclined to the left, and the wheel-tracks became fainter and less frequent. Had I wandered from the right road? I stopped and hesitated. What was to be done? I would have given

half the gold I possessed to any one who would have relieved me from this embarrassing perplexity—but there was no alternative. I must proceed; and with a heavy heart I sighed and walked on.

A sudden descent, caused by a dipping of the surface, shut out the view of the ground I had just traversed, and there appeared to be a path directly across the ravine which foot-passengers pursued, while carriages were obliged to take a leveller but more circuitous direction. Of course I selected the shorter route—descended to the hollow, climbed the opposite ridge, and again emerged upon the heath. Scarcely had I regained the broader path when a noise caused me to look round, and immediately behind I perceived a vehicle advancing rapidly. It approached and I stopped, hoping that I should gain some information from the traveller. Heavens! it was the same tax-cart—the same driver—that for days had hung upon my footsteps, constant as an avenging spirit! I stood like one spell-bound—I could not articulate a word. The stranger swept quickly by—murmured a hoarse “Good-night,” and in another minute disappeared behind a patch of copsewood.

I remained rooted to the spot—my brain half crazed with terror. Should I retrace my steps? If I did, was it probable that I should recover the right path, and be able in the dull light to disengage myself from the dreary waste on which I was so unfortunately belated? Should I persevere, it was tempting fate, and following the strange person, whose unabated pursuit had already caused such apprehension. I felt myself in a desperate extremity, and that feeling will sometimes call forth a hardihood in thought and action, which nothing beside could elicit. Such was its effect on me; and after a momentary pause I resumed the road courageously.

I had scarcely proceeded half a mile when a feeble light twinkled faintly across the waste, and told that a human dwelling was not very distant. The water spring, which the date-trees that surround it point to the thirsty traveller in the desert, could not be more rapturously regarded by him, than that feeble gleam by me. I felt as if new vigour strung my limbs. *There*

was hope—*there* was safety. That light was the beacon; and better still, the haven it showed was near. On I pressed, and in a few minutes stood before a small dilapidated dwelling, whose decayed sign-board intimated it to have been once the resting-place of travellers.

Mean and comfortless as it looked, I should have claimed its shelter with delight; but my joy was abated—my feeling of security destroyed, by perceiving the well-remembered vehicle before the door. The horse had been unharnessed, and of course, the driver was within.

There are times when even woman conquers fear. I felt there was for me but one course left. If I returned I should be pursued; if I passed the house I should be followed and overtaken. I once had—I now have—the nerve and daring of a man; but then sorrow and suffering had damped my energies and subdued my former spirit. There was no alternative. I taxed my courage to the uttermost, and with at least the semblance of boldness, entered the suspicious mansion.

The room I was introduced to was not ill-furnished, and certainly the outward appearance of the house was far more unpromising than the interior justified. It wanted the neatness of an English inn, but it had still the look of plenty, for an abundant supply of dried meats was hanging in the chimney, and a comfortable wood fire, the beacon which directed me across the heath, was blazing on the hearth. The servant, when I lifted the latch, appeared at first astonished at the visit of a stranger; but with an effort at boorish civility she pointed to a seat, and then left the kitchen, as I supposed, to apprise her master that an unexpected guest was come.

When left alone I glanced suspiciously round, and many circumstances rather increased than diminished the evil impression, which the neglected exterior of the house had first created. A quantity of game was suspended from the ceiling, and two double guns stood in a corner of the chamber. Rabbit nets, gins of various descriptions, and other matters employed in poaching, with whose uses I was well acquainted, were partially concealed beneath a chest of drawers. To judge from

the appearance of the whole, I should rather pronounce the place to be the habitation of a smuggler, than a house where the traveller would seek for rest and entertainment.

My observations were speedily interrupted. Another and a very different-looking female entered; and, after surveying me with a keen and impertinent stare, announced herself to be the mistress of the mansion.

She seemed to be a woman beyond my own age, and no doubt had once been remarkably handsome; but her beauty was sadly impaired—years could not have done it, and I concluded it was more the work of dissipation than time. She was highly rouged, showily dressed, and wore a profusion of jewellery, which from their bad combination told that quantity and not good taste was her fancy. The richness of these ornaments was far too costly for her walk of life; and it was altogether out of character to see the bustling hostess tricked out like a tragic queen. One thing my quick eye discovered,—the ornaments were genuine, and this expensive display added considerably to my alarm.

With a tone intended to be gracious she bade me welcome, and inquired what refreshment I should choose. I asked for supper; she bowed, told me it should be prepared immediately, and, desiring the country-girl to bring more billets to the fire, left the room.

It was quite clear that I had fallen into dangerous company. The game, the fire-arms, the exhibition of jewels so unsuited to the mistress of a country inn, bore fearful evidence that the calling of the inmates of the house was any thing but honest. Determined to see more of the mansion if possible, I requested the attendant to conduct me to a chamber. She hesitated—took a light, told me to wait a little, and left me, as she said, to speak to her mistress. I heard her as the door was ajar. To her question the hostess replied: "The back room—if it is ready," and next moment the maid returned, and beckoned me to follow.

The upper story of the inn was dirty and uncomfortable. I passed several rooms, and the last in the lobby, as it would appear, had been the one selected

for my accommodation, but a glance at the door was quite sufficient to determine me against becoming its occupant. The others had nothing remarkable to attract the eye, but mine was provided with two strong bolts, while on the inside, there was no fastening but a common latch. The bed and furniture were not inviting, and I observed that the window was grated closely. Without permitting the attendant to observe any change in my manner, I returned with her to the lower chamber, and presently supper was laid.

God knows, I had no appetite for the meal; but I ate—drank some ale—and managed to suppress every symptom of distrust. From the maid, who appeared a simple rustic, I found out the direction to the next hamlet, and ascertained that it was but two miles distant, and that the road was easily found. This was all I wanted—the sooner I set out the better—I requested the attendant to bring in my reckoning, and prepared to start on my hazardous expedition.

Almost immediately the hostess herself appeared; she manifested surprise and disappointment at my unexpected departure, and endeavoured to dissuade me against leaving the house until morning. "The heath was unsafe after night—the path devious and hard to find—would I but wait till morning, her husband should drive me to the village, as he was obliged to repair thither on business." All these arguments were urged in vain, and again I asked, "what I had to pay for my entertainment?"—"To pay!" she exclaimed with a scornful stare—"a poor traveller like thee cannot be overburdened with money, and I can afford a supper." I thanked her for her kindness, lifted my bundle, and bade her "good night." She followed to the door, and renewed her entreaties to remain.

"And *will* you go?" she said. I replied that I was determined.

"I wish you safe," she continued with a sneer; "stouter travellers have taken the road, and never reached their destination!"

She turned in, closed the door, and I found myself once more upon the waste.

During my short sojourn at the inn, the night had changed, and the sky indicated an approaching storm. The breeze, in unsteady gusts, came moaning across the moorland—the moon was occasionally hidden—and on the edge of the horizon faint lightnings played, followed by the hoarse murmurings of distant thunder. All foretold a coming tempest, and I hurried on to reach some place of shelter, before its fury burst upon me.

Even in this desolate place and trying hour one circumstance prevented my heart from sinking; I had left the mysterious traveller behind, and the vehicle which had caused me such repeated alarms, was standing before the alehouse door, if an alehouse that suspicious dwelling was. As yet no serious impediment had appeared; the road was circuitous but easily found out; and though the moon was frequently obscured by floating clouds, I pursued my journey without interruption. The moorland swelled gradually upwards as I advanced, and on the crest of the high ground in front, there was a patch of dark underwood to the left; while on the right an object was visible, which, from its appearance, I concluded to be a finger-post.

I pressed onwards—from this height I should probably discover the village lights, and even a distant prospect of human dwellings would cheer me to new exertion. I entered the brake—shrubs and copse skirted the path. Was it the right one? I raised my eyes and looked at the finger-post. Heavens!—it was a gibbet—time-worn and decayed—but still a fragment of the murderer was swinging from its shattered arm; and the blanched skull and bare bones rattled in the night wind, as the unsteady gust struck them in its passage.

I nearly lost my senses. I have crossed a battle-field days after the work of death had ended, when the unburied slain, stripped of all covering, tinged with the blueness of corruption, and swollen to unnatural size, lay thick around; but that fleshless felon was the most horrible spectacle that ever blasted my sight!

I dare not look a second time, but rushed madly into

the copse. The moon shone forth again, and I found myself in a small glade, shut out from that hideous and disgusting memorial of a murder. Almost exhausted, I stopped for a moment to breathe. A man's hand was laid upon my shoulder. I shrieked and sprang forward: the Jew was at my side!

"Mercy!"—I cried—"Mercy! I have gold; take it freely, but do not murder me."

The stranger remained silent; and from beneath the shading of a hood attached to his horseman's cloak, I could remark eyes of uncommon brilliancy fixed on mine.

"Spare me," I continued, "wretched as a lone wanderer may seem to be, I have more gold than those of wealthier appearance."

A smothered and sarcastic laugh was the only answer to my appeal.

"If you do not want money, why follow, why detain me? I never injured—I never knew you."

"Both statements are untrue," he replied, in a suppressed and hollow voice. "You injured—and you knew me."

"Never!—You mistake me for another."

"No—no," he returned coldly; "objects of my love or hate have never been forgotten."

He held me from him at arm's length—flung off his riding-cloak—and as it fell upon the ground, exclaimed in a voice that made me tremble—

"Does Reuben Woolfe the Jew, bear any similitude to Michael Cooper the Gipsy?"

"Michael!" I replied with a shudder—"and has justice not yet overtaken the spiller of blood?"

"Look at me," was his answer, "and it will be idle to reply. I am here. No longer the hunted gipsy, but more powerful than any member of the same people has been, since they left their eastern birthplace to wander among the nations of the north."

"What want you with me?" I asked firmly. "I have offered gold and you reject it. Unhand me. I must—I will proceed."

"Must and will," returned the gipsy, "are gallant

words—but here, I suspect, they are idly used. Once you were in my power, and fortune enabled you to leave and scorn me. Miracles are of rare occurrence. The arm that smote me is cold. Were it not, I have means now which then I wanted, to make thy rescuer wait the hour when he roused my vengeance.”

“He never feared you, Michael—and he is now beyond mortal enmity.”

“So much the better for both. Ellen, your fate hangs upon a breath. Hear and decide.”

I listened to the gipsy chief in breathless astonishment. The coldness of his unimpassioned address made me tremble; for a villain’s calmness is more to be dreaded than the fury of the brave. He thus continued:

“Ellen—I may betray some weakness—no matter—there is no one to witness it. I once loved you, and see how that influenced our mutual fortunes. You spurned the gipsy, and preferred becoming the mistress of an adventurer. Ay, the veriest of adventurers—a soldier—one whose fantastic honour refused you the silly bond of matrimony, which even the humblest peasant exacts from her admirer. You were then in affluence, and I in misery. Let that pass. I shall not say what you are now. Hear what my career has been.

“There are in this country men of action and intelligence—no matter what the world calls them. I joined them in my hour of danger, and passed among them for a Jew: my face required but the addition of a beard, and that was easily effected. Short as my connexion with them has been, I am now a leader of the body, and direct a confederacy that spreads itself over half the island, and defies the law and its myrmidons to break it up. Others are the tools, and I the agent. All connected with the body, from the smuggler to the house-breaker, are under my control; and though they never know from whom the order comes, they are obedient to the mandate of those, of whose names and abodes they are in total ignorance. We procure intelligence—we arrange the plans—and it is their business to carry our orders into execution. Enough of what I am. A few years of success will render me wealthier

than ever any of our tribe has even dreamed of being. I will then retire to another country. What will not gold do? My gipsy blood may hereafter circulate in the veins of the proudest noble of the land of my adoption. Ellen, you know me. Ambition has chalked the path out—and stern resolution shall not be wanted to sweep aside every obstacle that would bar me in my bold career."

I listened in breathless amazement to the soaring projects of the low-born ruffian. The moon shone brightly out. Fired at the picture his fancy sketched of future greatness, his head was thrown proudly back, his eye compressed and animated; while his wild dress, added to a belt in which were pistols and a dagger, gave to his whole appearance the look of a bold and adventurous brigand. In the same low and unimpassioned tone he thus continued:

"Ellen, your fate is linked to mine—our fortunes must run together. My slighted love has been deeply avenged, and the temporary success of a hated rival repaid by blood and misery. When the lost child was smiling in your arms, as you sat before the cottage door, and I was constrained to beg an alms to save me from starvation—did you then guess what its fate would be? Or, as you turned an eye of womanly pride towards his handsome father from the abject wretch who was then beholden to your bounty, did you dream, that I, despised and wretched as I was, had doomed my enemy to death?"

The allusion to my child and his brave father, roused my spirit, and I found the blood once more flush my cheek.

"*You* doom him to death!" I exclaimed. "No, Michael! had you crossed his path, Harley would have crushed you like a worm. No; my loved one died on the battle-field, sword in hand, as the brave should only die. While you, like yonder murderer, will blanch upon a gibbet."

"And did I not effect his death?" he said, with a bitter sneer. "Who drove him to the battle-field on which he fell? Listen, and judge. I found you surrounded

with plenty—you had a lover and a child—a home and independence. I visited you—in four days the cottage was a ruin—the corn-stacks dispersed in ashes to the winds. Whose hand fired house and barn, Ellen?"—and he grasped mine with painful force—"That hand holds yours!"

"Execrable ruffian!"—I exclaimed. "Your boast is indeed too true. You drove us into penury, and death and misery came after."

"Well," he replied; "my vengeance is now complete. I am not implacable, Ellen. I have removed a rival, and deprived you of a protector. Come—you shall have one more powerful. We'll forget the past, return to the house you quitted—for that and twenty more are at my command. I will deck you in the jewels of a countess. Ask aught that money can obtain in Britain, and it is yours. You are the only mate for Michael. I love a spirit free and fearless as my own. Yes; I have willed it so, and this night you shall be my bride."

I was mute with terror and astonishment. If apprehension from his hatred had alarmed me, the avowal of his love was infinitely more revolting; and a thrill of horror rushed to my heart, as I plucked my hand from his.

"Your bride!—the bride of Harley's murderer! Wretch! before the lips that felt his kisses should be contaminated by a monster like thee, I would stab myself!"

"Ellen," he answered coolly, "this is mere girlish trifling, and suited to neither the time or place. We are waited for. I told them before I left the house, to prepare a better supper than what was offered you. Come—it may spoil. You and I know each other too well to make further fooling necessary."

My situation was very desperate. In the power of one so cold and merciless—resolute in purpose, immovable in temper—threats or supplications with such a man were equally unavailing. Even then, in that dreadful extremity, my spirit bore me up; and I resolved to resist the villain—ay, even to the death.

"Michael," I said, "you have a man's strength, and there lies your only superiority; for in determination I am your equal. Let me pass. If there be a spark of manly spirit in your bosom, you will not harm the woman who asks your pity. You cannot bend me to your will. No—by heaven!—though you should murder me."

"And this would be a fitting place for such a deed," the villain continued, in the same calm tone. "You marked the gibbet hard by. Had the light allowed, there is a stone beside it that tells the history. There was a weak and obstinate wench—one like thee, Nell. She had a lover—a wild one too—the liker Michael Cooper. Well, liker us still, the silly girl knew too many of his secrets. He tired of her, they say, and attached himself to another. She urged a meeting with him here;—they met; she upbraided, and he retorted. Words grew warmer; and, stung with jealousy and rage, she threatened a discovery. The result was, that next morning the wench was found where the gibbet stands, with a fractured skull. He managed the matter clumsily, and was hanged; and, a few yards off, all that remains of him are a few bare bones shivering in the night-breeze. Come, Nell, let us be moving."

Seizing my arm, he pulled me some yards along the path; but mustering my whole strength, I disengaged myself from his grasp, and rushed wildly towards the direction in which I thought the village lay. But escape was hopeless;—in a moment I was overtaken, and locked closely in the ruffian's arms. A final struggle ensued—he to retain, and I to break away. Just then the sky appeared to open—every thing around was revealed distinctly as at noon-tide—the vivid flash was followed by a crash of thunder, loud and prolonged, as if it announced the ruin of a world.

"Hold—Michael!" I exclaimed. "Hold; hear you not the voice of heaven? Forbear!"

His reply was too blasphemous to be repeated. It told my doom—death or insult awaited me! In vain I screamed—in vain I supplicated the scoundrel's pity. My voice died away unheard over the dreary waste,

my prayers were unregarded, my strength failed, my limbs tottered, my breath was lost.

"Now comes Michael's triumph!" he muttered, as he grasped me tighter. Another flash lightened the copse—another crash burst over our heads. For a second the poniard in the villain's belt sparkled. I caught at the handle and clutched it—my energies were overcome—I staggered, and struck a wild and random blow. The weapon, keen as a lancet, pierced the murderer's throat—his hold relaxed—he leaped convulsively from the ground, came down heavily, and lay without motion on the ground beside me. Two hollow groans, a gurgling noise like the choking of a sinking swimmer—one long faint sigh—and Michael was a dead man!

I lay beside the departed murderer—the knife was sticking in his throat, his eyes were open, and as flash after flash came volleying from the heavens, I thought he was grinning at me in deadly but impotent rage. Presently I felt a revulsion to the heart, leaped from the ground, and rushed wildly from the scene of slaughter.

* * * *

For a long interval I remember nothing. They found me in the morning roaming through the hamlet, and my senses totally fled. A wounded officer fortunately was on leave of absence there. He recognised me, told the story of my sufferings during the retreat, interested the villagers on my behalf, and had me carefully attended to. My ravings, as I was afterwards told, were frightful, but they were attributed to another cause than the true one. Michael's death was involved in deep mystery; some ascribed it to suicide—a belief almost confirmed, by the circumstance that the weapon of destruction was his own; others suspected that he had been murdered by his lawless confederates; and their sudden abandonment of the lonely house upon the moor, went far to strengthen that conclusion.

Why prolong the tale? I recovered slowly, and again found myself upon the world. I had known every alternation of human fortune. Nursed in penury, and reared in splendour—seduced, abandoned, protected, and be-

loved—now gifted with independence—a mother, and, in all save the name, a wife—then the follower of a camp, bereaved of child and lover, an outcast, a murderess, and a maniac!

* * * * *

I could not rest in England; the loss of my boy partially unsettled my reason, and in the fond hope that he still lived, and that accident might yet restore him, I followed Lord Wellington's army, when a British force was sent a second time to the Peninsula.

I shall not detain you with the adventures of a camp follower; it is, as you well know, only an unvaried record of perils and privation. More than once I fancied that I had gleaned some intelligence of my child. Alas! it was illusory, and fond expectation ended in the bitterest disappointment. My gipsy habits, and an utter contempt of danger—for life so valueless as mine costs not a thought about its preservation—enabled me to accompany a conquering army. I shared largely in the spoil of many a battle-field, and amassed much wealth. At last, weary of scenes of war, and all hope of recovering the lost one over, I returned to my native land, and rejoined the wandering people where you found me. My power over them is boundless; for gold, that controls all from the court to the cottage, influences the gipsy bivouac as powerfully as it does the camp of kings. Here, in the same rude tent, where the first cry of infancy was heard, my passing sigh shall escape. I was born free as the mountain deer—I will live the life of liberty—and when my mortal course "is well nigh done," the tameless spirit shall part among the untamed, and but one command be given—to bear me hither, and lay me in my mother's grave!"

The solemnity of the place and hour, the confession of a tale of blood, struck O'Connor, firm as he was, with a feeling of unusual depression. Both for some time were silent; but the gipsy was the first to break it.

"You march to-morrow; and here we part."

"And that we ever meet in this world is more than doubtful." Said the soldier, with a deep sigh.

"*We shall meet*," replied the gipsy solemnly. "Bet-

ter we did not, for the meeting will be a melancholy one for both."

"Nonsense, Ellen; you yield to delusive fancies. These are but idle phantasies of a heated brain. Surely you cannot believe that *you* can know aught belonging to futurity?"

"Yes," she replied. "The gipsy reads what other eyes cannot discern. I know your fortune; your fate is open to me; and yet I am blind to my own."

"Say boldly, Ellen, what that fate will be!"

"A short and spirited career—a sudden and a glorious death!"

"You foretell a brave and noble destiny."

"I tell only what is decreed," she returned. "I never saw a hand on which one peaceful line of happiness could not be traced but yours. Well, O'Connor, you have the gipsy's blessings—we must separate."

"Stay, Ellen; before you leave me, will you reply to some questions?"

"Ask! they shall be answered."

"You seem to love one person as ardently as you detest another. I mean your regard for Mary Howard appears equalled by your hatred of her lover."

"Why should I not love her tenderly? Breathes there a being that should have the same hold upon this withered heart as she? That sweet child, who lay for months upon my bosom, as though I had been her mother—she, whose rosy lips I kissed before I slept—she, whose infant prattle was the first sound I heard for many a month when waking—she—the child of him who succoured my dying parent, and who, when deserted by all the world beside, sheltered and protected me. O'Connor, if a life could secure the happiness, and avert the misfortunes of Mary Howard, I would buy her weal with mine. But, alas! it is fated; the decree has gone forth, and destiny will be fulfilled."

"Nonsense, Ellen. I am no believer in blind predestination. Warn her of her danger, and you will avert it."

"No—~~she~~ would not believe me—for she could not comprehend the extent of man's villany—and one

honeyed word from that accomplished scoundrel would undo even an angel's warning."

"But why do you attach such mischief to his suit? Why is he more dangerous than other profligates? Mary Howard is too exalted in her purity, to dread aught from Phillips. He may woo and leave her. He may wring her heart, and trifle with her affections; but beyond this, nothing need be dreaded."

"You ask me why I fear and hate that man? Listen—and then say whether the designs of such a scoundrel, are not more formidable than those of ordinary profligates. From the wild and wandering habits of our tribes things are known to us, that would almost appear, when unexplained, rather the work of divination, than simply resulting from the insight into human life, which an eternal change of place and an extended intercourse with the whole family of man afford to the gipsy tribe. Humble as our influence may seem, it reaches where it could not be supposed. To us, the palace is open as the cottage; and strange and wonderful are the mysteries concealed closely from the world, but every day revealed to us. Those whose rank and intellect would never permit them to stoop and parley with a wandering mendicant, pry anxiously into the decrees of fate; and men who proudly lock their secret thoughts and actions from their equals, open them unreservedly to a vagabond like me! This may appear incredible, but remember that human nature in all cases and circumstances is the same: the life of the wisest is but a chapter of contradictions—and cunning and folly, weakness and determination, mix in and mar the deepest schemes which mortal foresight forms. Now hear a tale of villany—and, when you have heard it, judge wherefore I tremble for that artless girl.

"It was late in the autumn of last year, and we had been sojourning in the neighbourhood of a garrison town. We were encamped upon a heath, and I was returning to our bivouac from a village in the vicinity of our halting-place, to which some business had brought me. It was evening—the light was fading fast—and when I came to a part of the forest where the path

crossed the highway, I was surprised to see a female on the road-side suffering acutely from illness or fatigue. I approached and spoke kindly to her. She seized my hand in hers, and, with a wild grasp, told me she was dying. I strove to cheer her—despatched the girl that attended me for a cart—seated myself beside the poor sufferer, and comforted her with an assurance of immediate succour. The vehicle came promptly—I removed her in it to my tent—laid her on my own bed—and, to be brief, in two hours she gave birth to a dead child.

I saw that she could not outlive her baby long—she was sinking fast—and all I could do was done. Our humble means and skill were exhausted to save her; but it was vain, for life was ebbing. The delicacy of the skin, the softness of the hand, the fine texture of her under garments, required less than gipsy acuteness to ascertain that the poor sufferer had been cradled in the lap of luxury. Finding herself dying, she requested to be left with me alone; a wave of the hand cleared the tent, and I sat down beside her humble pallet.

She turned her fading eye on mine—once it had been a soft and lustrous hazel one.

"Thanks"—she said, "my last thanks! Oh, God! that my mother's child should draw her last breath, disgraced, deserted, and even without the comfort of a good man's prayer! Kind gipsy, listen to me—I cannot leave the world without telling you a tale of crime—you can bear evidence to its punishment. Oh! have my dying request attended to. Let me and the fruit of my offending be laid in hallowed ground, and the child of sin and shame sleep in the same earth that covers its guilty mother.

"I am the daughter of a field-officer. I was born in India—my mother died, and I was sent to England an infant. There I remained for many years, carefully and expensively educated: and at eighteen my father returned and claimed me. From school he took me to a fashionable watering-place—and in the winter visited London, and next season returned to Cheltenham. There, unhappily, he met a lady of great personal attractions, and, though but a year older than myself, he

was weak enough to marry her. A man shattered in constitution and above sixty had little chance of happiness from such a union. His wife and daughter were rivals. Both sought, unknown to the other, admiration from the same source; and, as it may be imagined, mutual ruin was the consequence.

"My strength is sinking," she said, "and let me hurry over my guilty story.

"We went next season to Harrowgate, and there met one whom, even in death, I will not name. May God pardon him as I do! He was introduced to my unhappy father, brought to the house, and, with the unsuspecting confidence of a man who knew nothing of the world, permitted to domesticate himself in our family. He sought every opportunity to win my affections, and told an artful story, which lulled every fear to rest; I believed—confided—was fascinated—and undone!

"Months passed—shame and guilt are consequent on each other—and mine was not to be concealed. I urged that marriage so often and so solemnly promised, and day after day my request was evaded. At last, wearied by my importunities, or unable to dissemble longer, he abruptly quitted the house. I wrote to him—appealed to his better feelings, and stated the desperation of my own. I conjured him, by every holy oath and promise, to rescue me from the shame he had wrought, and retrieve what before had been an unsullied reputation. By a chain of accidents the letter fell into my father's hands the morning after his own wife had eloped with my betrayer!

* * * * *

"What was the result? The abused old man retired to his chamber, and, while reason was overthrown, destroyed himself!

* * * * *

"For weeks it was necessary to place me under restraint. I grew calmer, and the physician pronounced me convalescent. The first use I made of liberty, was to wander forth in search of my undoer. I discovered that he was in the neighbouring town, and thither I di-

rected my course. Fatigued with exertions too great for my weakness I rested, nearly fainting, on the bank where you found me. A rush of horses caused me to look round—it was an officer and lady, followed by a servant. They passed me at speed. One glance—and it was fatal. It was my seducer—and his wretched victim—my father's wife!"

Her failing strength could hold out no longer. She fell heavily on my breast—I called for help, and had wine administered. Once or twice she essayed to speak—but the words were unintelligible—and with one long deep sigh—the parting struggle of a broken heart—she drooped her head forward and expired in my arms.

"Great God! can there be such villany on earth, and it remain unpunished?" exclaimed the soldier, as Ellen's melancholy narrative ended. "I had heard that before he joined us, Phillips had been engaged in an affair of gallantry, but the lady's levity was so great, that in a few months she left him for another."

"Ay," replied the gipsy; "that was the worthless wife. Shame closed the lips of the poor sufferer, and she carried her secret to the grave, while her abandoned stepmother gloried in an open exhibition of her infamy. Thus a part only of the villany of Phillips was known, and that infinitely the more pardonable of his proceedings. It is time to separate; and we must part."

"I am deeply grieved," said the soldier, "to think that poor Mary should be exposed to the artifices of that accomplished scoundrel. Had I remained in England my threatened vengeance might have restrained him. All that can be hoped is from her high principles, and his dastardly apprehensions."

"Adieu, O'Connor," said the gipsy, with considerable emotion—"Good fortune follow thee! She who has a loved brother in the field, will not joy over his fame and safety more ardently than I will over thine!"

"Farewell, Ellen," replied the soldier. "To you I confide Mary Howard. Watch over her as a mother"—and stooping down, he kissed her tenderly.

"Farewell," she muttered—and O'Connor felt her

tears upon his cheek. "It is the parting kiss of friendship; and thine are the last lips that shall ever press the gipsy's!—Farewell."

The words were scarcely spoken until she glided from his side. He saw her dark form vanish beneath the shadow of the tower—her footsteps died away in the silence of the night, and the soldier felt himself now the only living thing among the mansions of the dead.

"Strange and eventful is that woman's history"—he murmured. "A heart in which daring and tenderness unite—a mind in which madness and intelligence are so blended." He mused for a few minutes on his own wayward fortunes, and then, with a deep sigh left, as he imagined, the village churchyard for ever.

When he reached the inn he found that all but his own servant had retired to bed, and he delivered a letter to his master. It was an official note from Phillips, stating that he had been unexpectedly called away, and begging that the major would excuse him from marching with the detachment. His absence was a relief to his rival; and O'Connor was thus saved the annoyance of holding any further intercourse with a man whom he so thoroughly hated and despised.

CHAPTER XI.

DEPARTURE FROM COUNTRY QUARTERS—A PARTING INTERVIEW.

KING HENRY. On, on, ye noble English—
For there is none of you so mean and base,
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes.
I see you stand like grayhounds in the slip,
Straining upon the start—the game's afoot:
Follow your spirit.

KING HENRY V.

PISTOL. Touch her soft mouth and march. *ib.*

THE morning sun had scarcely broken on an unclouded sky when the bugle sounded, and the village street showed signs of military preparation. The baggage was already gone, and the men, in full marching order, were falling in before the Grayhound. Being the *élite* companies of a light infantry regiment, their dress and appearance were smart and soldierly. All were in the prime of life, or entering on the world, with the ardour of "hope-fed youth;" while the prospect of a bustling campaign added to the excitement attendant on a change of quarters.

Yet looking down the line, here and there a face might be discovered, on which symptoms of depression could be traced. Rustic *liaisons* had been interrupted by a summons to the field—the raw soldier fancied he was leaving Ashfield with a broken heart—while streaming eyes from many a cottage-window, told that he had not urged his suit in vain. For these sentimental sufferings, alas! there was no sympathy. At the sorrows of his young companion the older soldier laughed, as he favoured him with a long list of sundry demoiselles whom in his time he had loved and left behind him. It

is consolatory to know that others have suffered and survived. Gradually the "pale lover" became resigned to the visitation, and submitted to his fate; and before the detachment halted in the next town, Pat was singing like a blackbird, and poor Phillis already half forgotten.

The moment for departure had come. O'Connor mounted his horse; the advanced guard was thrown out; the word to march was given; the bugles played a quick step, and Ashfield was left.

As the gay detachment passed through the street, hands were kissed and handkerchiefs waved their mute adieus. Of all the village belles, the prettiest and the tenderest of the sufferers was the fair milliner. Unconsciously O'Connor had achieved a conquest there. His graceful farewell was afterwards long remembered, and for many a month Miss Burnett never named "the brave and gentle Irishman," but an involuntary sigh betrayed the deep impression the manly and unpretending soldier had left behind.

Alas! while he kissed his hand to her, he was only thinking of another. The line of march was directly before the windows of the parsonage; and as he approached the dwelling of his lost love, he felt a sinking of the heart as if he was bidding happiness an eternal farewell. Fearing that any eye should remark his visible agitation, he ordered the music which had ceased, to play again. Phillips, whose taste was excellent, had occasionally directed the bugle practice, and had chosen pieces for their performance. Among others he had arranged Mary Howard's song; and, as if it were to more pointedly recall the late scene of O'Connor's rejection, it was that tune that the bugle-master selected.

Mr. Howard was standing at the entrance of his avenue, and as the detachment passed him, he took leave of his friends individually. O'Connor pulled up his horse and dismounted; while the old man, under considerable emotion, bade him a kind farewell.

"This is to me, major, a very painful moment. I have now looked at many a face that I shall never look on again. I, who in the course of natural events should

be foremost for the grave, am most probably destined to survive many of those who seem to have only touched on the opening of their mortal journey. Mary wishes to speak to you. I would return with you, but the last duties of religion require my attendance," and he pointed to an approaching funeral, that by a singular accident crossed the line of march, and formed a strange and melancholy contrast to the gay procession it encountered.

"That is, indeed, a striking picture," he continued. "How emblematic of human life! in which brightness and gloom are so intimately blended! Your procession, full of high hope and entering on its brilliant and exciting career, and yon dark train winding to the close of every mortal course—the same goal at which the race of all, the fortunate and the miserable, must terminate—the grave—the grave! God bless you, my friend. If an old man's prayers can win prosperity, you have my warmest ones for your happiness. Farewell. It is unlikely that in this world we shall ever meet again. May we meet in a better one!"

A tear stole down his cheek as he pressed the soldier's hand, and left him to join the funeral train.

To meet Mary Howard again was what O'Connor neither expected nor desired. It was however unavoidable. A servant took his horse, and he hurried along the avenue as if anxious to get a painful interview as quickly ended as he could. In the same room in which his suit had been rejected, he found her whom he had loved and lost.

Mary Howard was in tears; and the soldier was deeply affected as he sat down beside her. She was the first to speak.

"And you would have left us, Major O'Connor, without bidding me farewell. Alas! have I so soon forfeited your friendship?"

"Oh, no, Miss Howard; that would be impossible. I shall ever think of you as a beloved sister. I must confess my weakness. I feared a parting would be painful to us both, and therefore thought it would be better avoided."

"Then I have not unintentionally offended you? I have a request to make, and will Major O'Connor grant it?"

The soldier pressed her hand as he replied—"It is only for Mary Howard to name her wishes, and for me to see them gratified."

"You are leaving England," she continued, in a broken voice; "and God knows how many chances are against our ever meeting. That my feelings for your future happiness are deep and lasting, my own heart can best tell. Is there any impropriety in confessing that regard which a sister may bestow? Such is mine for you, O'Connor. I am affianced to another; my hand is plighted to him—*him* I shall love as a wife loves—*you* as an only brother."

She burst into tears; and the soldier was deeply agitated.

"The request I would make, is that you will send me your picture. When far away I will think of you and pray for you."

The soldier pressed her to his heart. "Oh! Mary, had we met sooner or never, I should have been spared an aching heart. Your wishes shall be obeyed."

"I thank you. Here is a little token of affection. When you look at it, sometimes remember her that gave it."

It was a locket, containing a well-executed miniature and a ringlet of her beautiful hair. The soldier placed it in his bosom, and for some time both continued silent. At last O'Connor rose—

"It is painful, Mary, to say farewell; but the word must be spoken."

"Farewell, my friend—my brother!" and yielding to feelings that could not be controlled, she laid her head upon his shoulder, and wept without restraint.

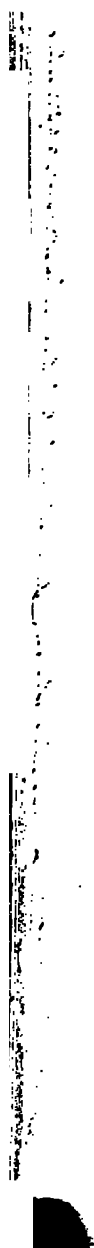
The soldier gazed on the lovely being from whom he was about to separate for ever, with a look of mute agony that told the bitterness of parting, pressed her wildly to his bosom, kissed her again and again; then, as if he dreaded a deeper exhibition of his feelings,

rushed from her presence, sprang upon his horse, and galloped off to overtake the detachment.

Poor Mary! well might she weep. As true a heart as ever beat for woman had been offered and refused; and, fascinated by the artful homage of a traitor, the cup of happiness had been within her grasp—and in a luckless hour she rejected it!

THE MARCH FROM ASHFIELD.

HERMIONE. Pray you, sit by us,
And tell's a tale.
MAMILIUS. Merry or sad shall't be?
HERMIONE. As merry as you will. WINTER'S TALE.



CHAPTER XII.

THE MARCH FROM ASHFIELD.

WHEN O'Connor rode up to the detachment he had resumed his customary bearing, although a sadder heart never throbbed beneath the semblance of indifference. The only woman he had loved was lost to him—he had parted from Mary Howard for ever—he should never see her again; for to see her the wife of another would be distracting. He overtook O'Brien, and two or three mounted officers who were riding in the rear; while, perfectly unconscious of the pain he was inflicting upon his friend, his light-hearted countryman rallied the commander on his temporary desertion.

"So you have been sentimentalizing, O'Connor! and no doubt bidding the gentle Mary a soft farewell! Did you vow fidelity and swear, 'when the wars ended,' to return to the lady of your love and lay your laurels at her feet? Poor thing! of course she was dolorous at losing us. The villagers would have it that she was on the eve of promotion; and the only point of difference among them seemed to be, whether she should become Mrs. Phillips or Mrs. O'Connor."

"Nonsense! O'Brien.—Pshaw!—what business have soldiers with wives?"

"True; and it would appear that poor Mary's swains came to this conclusion. The lady-killer has levanted; and, as the song goes, 'you love and you ride away.'"

The Major forced a sickly smile, while his tormentor continued—

"Was the parting very pathetic, O'Connor? Was it prudent and platonic—'hand to hand, like holy palmer's kiss,' or, as ancient Pistol says, did you 'touch her soft mouth and march?' Egad! I fancy I have stumbled on the truth; for, by the goddess of modesty! he blushes!

—Ho—ho—we'll no more of this. Well—it has pleased Heaven to make me of colder clay. I could bid Cleopatra good-by like a philosopher; and exclaim, with honest Nym, 'I cannot kiss, that is the humour of it; but adieu.' "

"But, Pat, what was that you were saying about your cousin and the card-case, when the Major rode up?" said the younger of the subalterns.

"Why, that a slight mistake in putting another man's tickets in his pocket, cost him a fortune."

"A mistake about a card-case cost a fortune?"

"Precisely so," replied the captain. "For six-penny-worth of pasteboard, Hector O'Dogherty was regularly disinherited by his affectionate uncle."

"Why," said the young subaltern, "what an unforgiving monster that uncle must have been!"

"Yes; honest Roderick was not moulded from the softest clay, and his enemies would tell you that at times he was rather short-grained. Lord! I fancy I see him now—his small gray eye flashing like a cat's in the dark, as he grasped his crutch to demolish Captain Coolaghan."

"Come, Pat, let us have the story," said another of the party.

"It is a long one," returned O'Brien.

"It is liker the march then; and it will get over a tedious mile or two of the road."

"Well, I believe it was the last martial passage in Roderick's history; and you must have it."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CARD-CASE.

BARDOLPH. Sir John, you are so fretful, you cannot live long.
KING HENRY IV.

HOTSPUR. Tell me, tell me,
How show'd his tasking? Seemed it in contempt?

VERNON. No, by my soul; I never in my life,
Did hear a challenge urged more modestly.

Ibid.

CAIUS. Vat be you all, one, two, tree, four, come for?

HOST. To see thee fight.

* * * * *

PAGE. Master Shallow, you have yourself been a great fighter.
MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

It was soon after the affair of New Ross that I obtained leave of absence from the general of the district, and repaired to the metropolis. I had been wounded by a rebel from a window with a slug; and though it traversed the bone without causing any injury, yet from the eccentric direction it had taken, an experienced practitioner was required to discover and extract it.

Two or three days after the operation had been successfully performed, I found myself able to move about, and set out to visit some of my acquaintances, who happened to be sojourning to the capital. Among others there was a kinsman of my mother, named Roderick O'Dogherty. He resided constantly in town, occupying a small house in Kildare-street, and thither I directed my course.

Roderick was the youngest son of my grand-uncle. He had him educated for a priest, but Roderick preferred the trade of arms. Early in life he entered the Austrian service, and through many ups and downs of fortune, raised himself to the rank of major-general, with the reputation of being a stout soldier. An unex-

pected succession to the property of a distant relative, fortunately enabled the general to retire from a profession, for which wounds and bad health had nearly rendered him unfit; and with the cross of Maria Theresa, a small pension, and a rich crop of laurels—if his own account were true—Roderick quitted Germany for his native land, and established himself comfortably in the capital. Ten years had passed since he had honoured Dublin with his presence, and time, which ameliorates many of the ills of life, had certainly wrought no change for the better in either the health or temper of my mother's kinsman, the worthy commander.

Whether his claims rested upon reputation in arms or on acquired wealth, no man exacted more attention from his relations to the third or fourth generation, than Roderick O'Dogherty. The most constant and punctilious inquiries after his health were indispensable, and the slightest omission was booked in the tablets of his memory against the unhappy offender. To visit him, Heaven knows, was any thing but an agreeable duty. If he happened to be gouty or rheumatic, one was doomed to listen patiently to a narrative of his sufferings, and the deepest sympathy expected in return for this condescension on his part, in favouring you with a detail of his afflictions. If there was any abatement of his numerous maladies, the unhappy visitor was martyred with interminable anecdotes of the seven years' war, and the exploits of a Baron Puffenberg, to whom half a century before the gallant general had been aide-de-camp.

Of all Roderick's kindred, I, probably, was the least assiduous in my attentions. Most of them were more closely related than myself, and therefore, I was not likely to figure in his last will and testament. In his best humour the commander was a bore, and in his ill-temper a firebrand. I was not obliged, I thought, to listen to long stories, or submit to his irritability, especially as it was more than doubtful that after he had been gathered to his fathers, I should find in the disposition of his effects any consideration for the same.

On hearing that I had been wounded and was in

town, Roderick had despatched his valet, Philip Clancy, to inquire for me at my hotel. This civility on the commander's part, of course demanded a suitable return—and on the morning in question, the first visit I made was to my distinguished relative.

I knocked at the door, and his man admitted me. One of honest Philip's intelligent looks told me "to prepare for squalls." "The ould gentleman had the devil's night of it!" he whispered as I mounted the stairs. "There was no standing him this morning, good or bad. He was as short in the temper as cat's hair, and would fret a saint, let alone a sinner like me." With this pleasant intimation, and the prospect of an agreeable *tête-à-tête*, I was conducted to the presence.

I found the commander ensconced in an easy chair with his infirm foot resting on a hassock, and a thick-winded pug reposing before the sounder member. I looked at my distinguished relative, and a crosser-looking elderly gentleman a dog never barked at! If, as it was said, the Irish adventurers so frequently found in the ranks of continental princes, were as dangerous to the fair as formidable to their enemies, I am persuaded that Roderick was a virtuous exception. He was now a little puffy man, fat enough for a friar, with thin legs and small gray eyes, ready to fire up at the slightest provocation. His nose was short and up-turned, and had never been an organ that a statuary would have selected for a cast. Yet, stunted as it was, a Hulan, it appeared, had fancied it for sabre practice, and by a bisecting scar rendered it the more remarkable. The commander was wrapped in a flannel dressing-gown, and wore a purple velvet nightcap. His hair, white as snow, was combed back into a queue, and secured with an ample bow of black riband. As a sort of moral for a soldier's use, there was no weapon visible in the apartment; while a crutch standing in one corner gave silent intimation that the warrior's career was done.

The pug hated me; and I, when I could manage a sly kick, returned the compliment. He barked at me to the best of his ability, until exhausted by the exer-

tion, he lay down again panting for breath, while his worthy master bade me welcome.

"Down, Beauty—down, I say. You are so seldom here that Beauty takes you for a stranger. Well—so you had that slug extracted. Pish! Nowadays men make a work about nothing. I remember Count Schroeder got a musket-bullet in the hip, at Breda, and he had it out and was on horseback again the second morning. Soldiers were soldiers then! What the devil were you about at Ross? You managed matters prettily."

"I think we did," I replied stoutly.

"Pish! Why did you let the rebels into the town?"

"Why—because we could not keep them out."

"Pshaw!" he growled testily. "I tell you how poor dear Puffenberg and I would have managed matters. We would have laned them with artillery—guns double loaded with grape and canister at point-blank distance—charged while the head of the column was broken, and supported the cavalry with—"

"We had no artillery but a few battalion pieces and a couple of old ship guns."

"Humph!" growled the commander. "Why not try cavalry?"

"Cavalry could not act. The masses were dense, the street filled with pikemen, and the windows crowded with musketeers. What impression could cavalry make against rebels in close column with pikes sixteen feet long?"

"Humph!"

"It was the gallantest affair during the rebellion, and old Johnson fought it nobly."

"Humph! Well, you dine here to-day at five? You'll meet your cousin Hector."

"I am unfortunately engaged."

"Humph! Always engaged. No matter. I want to talk to you to-morrow. Come to breakfast. Not later than eleven. Mind that."

I assented, and promised to be punctual.

"Hector is not pleasing me. I'm failing fast. He knows it. But if he disoblige me, and thinks I have

not resolution enough to cut him off with a shilling—clip him close as a game cock—he don't know Roderick O'Dogherty. Well, I see you are in a hurry, so good morning."

I left him, glad of escaping more of the reminiscences of Baron Puffenberg; and as I was being let out, found Hector, the hope of the O'Dogherties, knocking at the door. He turned with me down the street, and at once commenced a detail of his sufferings, and a diatribe touching his uncle's parsimony. No one was worse calculated to dance attendance on a peevish invalid than Roderick's heir-apparent. He was a wild, headstrong, mercurial character—a union of opposite qualities—a mixture of good and evil, and unhappily for himself, the latter predominated.

Hector was scarcely twenty, and one of the handsomest lads I ever saw. His education was imperfect and his principles lax. Had he been carefully brought up, and the bad portions of his disposition eradicated while a boy, he might have made a valuable man. But he had been spoiled by a weak mother—his vices had been permitted to run riot—and at the early age of twenty, Hector was a gambler and a duellist.

His means—those of the son of an embarrassed gentleman—were not flourishing; but his credit, based upon the expectancy of succeeding to the property of his uncle the general, kept him afloat. Nevertheless, a desperate love of play placed him in eternal difficulties, and his pugnacious spirit was under a constant excitement. His end was what might be easily anticipated. He quarrelled at a billiard-table with a gambler as fiery and wayward as himself, and, as we say in Connaught, was left next morning "quivering on a daisy."

Hector took my arm.

"Lord—I'm so glad to meet you, Pat! You have been with old Square-toes. Did he blow me up?"

"Why he did hint something about clipping you like a game cock, and marking his affection by the bequest of a shilling."

"Oh—the cross-grained rogue! Pat, you would pity me, if you knew half what I undergo. Because he

allows me a beggarly hundred a year, every quarter's check accompanied by a groan that would lead a stranger to suppose the old curmudgeon was in convulsions and a torrent of abuse that a pickpocket would not stand, I must visit him twice a day, dine with him on mutton chops, dawdle four hours over a rascally pint of sherry, and listen to his d—d yarns about Puffenberg and Schroeder, and the siege of Breda. Does he suspect that I shake the elbow?"

"Of that, Hector, I'll tell you more after breakfast to-morrow. I am going to him by special appointment, to hear a full detail of your delinquencies.

"Do you dine with the old tiger to-day?"

"I should be devilish sorry to interrupt your *tête-à-tête*. I told him I was engaged."

"Ah!—if I dare refuse! But one whisper that I handled a cue or threw a main, and my ruin was complete. I am forced to humour the old salamander, though it breaks my heart. Well, you will meet me at Darcy's? We'll have a grilled bone, and some sober conversation."

I declined; but Hector was so urgent, that at last I reluctantly consented. The truth was, he had already embroiled me in a quarrel, and introduced me, on one occasion, to a gaming-house where I had been pretty smartly plucked.

The lieutenant burst into a loud laugh—"Well said—Pat. Hang it, we never gave you the credit you deserve for high morality, and anti-duelling principles into the bargain."

O'Brien coloured, and replied, "Many, Lorimer, have been misunderstood; and such has been my case. Circumstances involved me in some unfortunate affairs, and obtained for me a character which I neither coveted nor deserved. Quarrels that I never courted have been forced upon me, and accident implicated me in disputes, from which nothing but a visit to the field could safely exonerate me as a soldier. There are about me now some two or three, *men* by profession, but *boys* in years and experience. Hear me, lads; and listen to my candid advice. Avoid a duellist as a nuisance—a gambler as

the devil! The first is bad enough; but he is innocent when compared with the second. True, he may involve you in a quarrel, but chance may extricate you uninjured, or you may escape with a broken bone—but from the other there is no deliverance. Titled or untitled it is all the same. He who will not spare wife, children, kindred, friends—will he show mercy to an acquaintance? Trust me, no honour binds him. The gambler, when he has you in his hand, will fleece you to the last guinea. Hope nothing from his name—nothing from his character. Though his lineage be old as the Conqueror—though his name be one that fortune enrols as foremost in her list—‘the man’s a man for a’ that.’ He plays, and is obnoxious to plunder himself; and if he can do it he plunders in return. The duellist is bad enough, but—”

“Why, d—n it, Pat, you have fought four times yourself!”

“I have, and I regret it. One unfortunate affair, I lament to add, has left this hand bloody. I have been twice as often in the field as second; and, thank God, no friend whom I accompanied fell. I have, unluckily, when honourable mediation was rejected or impracticable, been necessitated to resort to the last and worst alternative the code of honour sanctions; but, believe me, boys, he who is from necessity party to a duel, will never experience more pleasure than when he brings two brave men from the ground, uninjured in person and reputation.”

“This is a new doctrine of O’Brien’s,” said a young subaltern. “And we are not to fight, it seems?”

O’Brien regarded the speaker sternly.

“Fielding, I have a nephew about your own years, who carries the king’s colours of the 52d. He is the only child of a devoted mother; her first thought, her last prayer, is for the safety of her beloved boy. Were he insulted—mark my words—and did not assert his honour, I would pass him as an outcast—turn from him as a leper. No, boy, the honour of a gentleman should be his first care. The man whose courage is established is very seldom called upon: and the man who will

fight will rarely volunteer a quarrel. Hence, the brave pass through life generally unoffending others and unmolested themselves."

"How came it then, Pat, that with those feelings you have been so particularly unfortunate?"

"Simply because I joined a regiment that was miserably divided among themselves. County politics were its cause—patronage was shamefully abused—men of obscure birth and disreputable character obtained commissions; and in the — militia there were persons who should have worn no epaulet, except a footman's. But why waste good counsel upon idle boys? all is lost upon them; and though speaking for the last five minutes like an oracle, I might just as well have been whistling jigs to a milestone. But to resume my story. Fortunately for myself I was an hour too late in keeping my engagement with my cousin; and when I reached Earl-street, found Darcy's whole establishment in desperate commotion. There were in every direction the eye turned to incontestable symptoms of a general row; and the mortal remains of plates, dishes, and decanters, were strewn about the room, thick as leaves in Vallombrosa. From a waiter, who had been complimented with a black eye, I learned some particulars of the battle. Hector had been there, and ordered supper; sat down in expectation of my arrival, and managed to kill time while waiting for me by quarrelling with a military party in the opposite box. Two or three Connaught gentlemen espoused his cause of course, it being the wrong one, and a desperate onslaught was the consequence. In the *mêlée* D'Arcy's goods and chattels were demolished—challenges given and accepted—cards interchanged by the pack—the watch called in—and my excellent cousin borne off in triumph, after performing prodigies of valour by maiming divers of the king's subjects. Having secretly returned thanks to Heaven for my lucky escape, I directed my steps to the watch-house to visit my afflicted kinsman.

I reached the place, and thinking it prudent to reconnoitre before I made my *entrée*, I peeped slyly over the hatch. There was Hector, with sundry other malefac-

tors, in "durance vile." By a stranger my cousin might have been readily mistaken for the commander of the garrison, he appeared so perfectly at home, and exercised such absolute authority. The constable of the night and Roderick's heir presumptive were seated in close conclave in a corner, and from their position being contiguous to the door, I could overhear the whole colloquy. Dogberry was remonstrating.

"Arrah, Hecthur astore.* Arrah, now it's too bad—the third night this week. Have ye no conscience, man, in tattering that unfortunate tailor out of bed. Upon my sowl, he has a cough that would scar ye. He's a wakely divil; and as his wife said the last night, if ye'll drag him out of his warm bed, ye'll have his life to answer for."

"Pshaw!" ejaculated the prisoner. "He charges for all in the account. I never knock him up for bail but he lays it thick upon the next order. Send for him, Brady; get in as much porter and whiskey as will make all drunk, and we'll sit down comfortably at the fire."

"Make way for Mistur O'Dogherty," roared divers of the body-guard. "Get up, you in the corner there. Arrah! get out of the way; the gentleman's a regular customer, and we don't see you above twice in the twelvemonth." The seat of honour was directly vacated by the minor delinquent, and my excellent kinsman ceremoniously inducted thereunto.

From an imperfect view it struck me that Hector's person had not suffered material damage; but his disordered appearance, and clothes torn to ribands, clearly proved that the affair though short had been both sharp and spirited. Perceiving that my interference was unnecessary, I thought it no hour for salutations and quickly retreated to "mine inn," leaving the task of Hector's deliverance to the worthy artist, who, as it would appear, was my cousin's "standing bail."

Next day I repaired to Kildare-street in due time; and it was lucky that I was so regular, for Phil made a most alarming report. Overnight the gout had seized

* *Anglice*, Hector darling.

upon Roderick's better member; he was in considerable pain, and as Clancy said, "the priest himself darn't go near him." To add to the misfortune, several gentlemen had called early in the morning, stated their business to be urgent, and could scarcely be restrained by the valet from invading the sacred precincts of the commander's bedroom. Thus Roderick had been disturbed before his time, was consequently in most abominable temper, and I, alas! should in all likelihood be obliged to bear the first burst of gout and irritability.

I found him in company with his pug—*par nobile*—Ireland could not match them. Roderick was ready for battle; and though it was not five minutes past eleven, he rated me for the delay. Breakfast passed, and the general commenced:

"I had an infernal night of it—gout in the knee first; then moved to the ankle; lame in both legs; no sleep; could have dozed a little in the morning, when three scoundrels, with knocks that I thought would have demolished the door, disturbed me. Well they did not break into my bedroom! Private business forsooth. I'm pestered with fellows of their kind; force their way up under false pretences, all for one purpose—begging—begging. I have found Aladdin's lamp, I suppose. All—priests and parsons—all ring to the same tune—money, money. 'No family—blest with independence,' and other cant to effect one's spoliation. Hish! what a twinge! D—n it, you never had the gout, and have no more feeling for me than if I was a glandered horse!"

I assured him of my deep sympathy; but I suspect the terms I expressed it in were not over ardent.

"Humph!" he growled. "All words—mere words of course. But, regarding Hector—I hear he is dissipated—drinks—brawls—plays. I want you to ascertain the truth, and give me quiet and confidential information of his general proceedings."

I fired at the proposition, and losing all dread of the commander boldly renounced the commission.

"Why, sir, what the devil do you take me for! I turn spy upon my kinsman! By heaven! if a stranger proposed such an employment, he should dearly repent that he offered such an indignity."

The commander felt the rebuke, and began muttering what he intended as a qualification.

"No, Pat—no. D—n it, I did not mean that you should be a spy; but—but—"

"But, sir, yours was a proposition which no gentleman could listen to; and I wish you a good morning."

"Stop, I say—stop!" The hall-bell rang violently. "Confound it! the hotness of young men's tempers is nowadays intolerable. This is I suppose one of these damned visitors; but if I don't despatch him in double quick, my name's not Roderick!"

The commander was right in his supposition. Clancy announced the stranger as one of the sleep-breakers; handed in a card, on which was engraved, "Mr. Alleyn, 40th Regiment;" and next moment the gentleman was ushered in.

He was quite a lad, and also a very young soldier; for whether it was the importance of his embassy, or the vinegar aspect of the comrade of Baron Puffenberg that abashed him I know not, but he coloured up to the eyes, and seemed to be in evident confusion. I pointed to a chair—a civility which Roderick had omitted; and the following colloquy ensued:

"You are General O'Dogherty?" said the stranger as he referred to a visiting-ticket in his hand.

"Yes, sir, I have that honour; and you, sir, are Mr. Alleyn?" and the surly commander examined the young man's card.

"Yes, sir, my name is Alleyn; and sir—hem—it has given me pain, to be obliged—hem—to call on you—for—"

"Sir—I understand you—I am a plain man, and hate long speeches. In a word, sir, you might have spared your call; it will procure you nothing from me."

"This is very strange, sir—your character—"

"Pish! sir. I don't care a fig what any man says—and to cut short the interview, you may be off and try some other fool."

"Sir—this is unaccountable! I am not experienced in such matters, and confess I am rather embarrassed—"

"No doubt, sir, a common consequence of imprudence. I am busy, sir, and you intrude."

The young man reddened to the ears.

"Sir, this won't do. If you think to bully, you are mistaken. I insist on an immediate explanation."

"Why, zounds! Do you threaten me in my own house? I suppose you intend committing a burglary. Here, Clancy, show him the door."

"You shall hear me, sir! I have claims upon you that must be satisfied before I leave this."

"Why, you audacious scoundrel! Go for a peace officer, Clancy. I'll have you settled."

"Ah! I understand you; and it is time to leave you, sir, when you resort to the police. But let me say, that your conduct is ungentlemanly, and your meanness disgraceful to the profession you dishonour."

Roderick seized upon the nearest weapon of offence, the crutch, while Clancy by bodily force fairly ejected the visitor. He was expelled with great reluctance, and departed from the house vowing vengeance against the commander.

Roderick was nearly suffocated with fat and passion. He growled like a worried bear; while smart twinges of his disorder, accelerated no doubt by recent irritation, came faster and fiercer on.

"I wish I knew where the scoundrel could be found, I would indict him. I would, by every thing litigious, for attempting to obtain money by intimidation. Hish!—my toe—my toe! The villain—to fancy that I was to be bullied. Hish!—hish! Another fit brought on."

He continued grumbling and groaning for a quarter of an hour, until the malady abated, and his violent excitement had exhausted itself. Once more I rose to take my departure, when another thundering summons was heard at the hall-door—another card introduced—and immediately after, "Captain Coolaghan of the South Cork" was ushered into the presence of the ex-general. He too, as Phil Clancy mentioned in a whisper, was one of the sleep-breakers.

If the former visiter had evinced some diffidence in the opening of the interview, there was no indication of any tendency to blushing on the part of Captain Coolaghan of the South Cork. I examined his figure hastily—for it was rather remarkable. In age he was above fifty; in height, I should say, approaching to seven feet. His shoulders were broad—his legs thin—while his whole appearance had what the Irish call “a shuck look,” and told plainly that the visiter had never considered abstinence and water-drinking necessary for his soul’s weal. No man could be better satisfied with himself, or deemed his place in society less equivocal. He entered Roderick’s “great chamber” with a smile, nodded graciously to us both, established himself in a chair, produced a silver snuff-box of immense capacity, took a deep pinch, and then protruding his long chin sundry inches beyond his black stock, politely inquired, “which of the gentlemen was the general?”

A more infelicitous opening to an interview could not have been conceived. That there could be any doubt of his identity, or that the imprint of his former glory was not stamped upon his exterior, was death to Roderick; and quickly did he remove the stranger’s uncertainty.

“*I*, sir!” He exclaimed testily. “*I* am Major-general O’Dogherty.”

“Then, sir,” responded the visiter, “I am proud of the pleasure of making your acquaintance. Your friend, I presume?” and he bowed graciously to me.

“Yes, sir; and here with me on particular business.”

“I comprehend—all right;” and Captain Coolaghan closed his left eye knowingly. “We may proceed to business then at once; and faith, when a man kicks up a dust and gets into scrapes, why the sooner the thing’s settled the better.”

“Kicks up a dust—gets into scrapes! Why, sir, what the devil do you mean?” exclaimed the friend of Puffenberg, as he looked daggers at his new acquaintance of the South Cork.

“Why then, indeed, general, your treatment of my young friend of the 40th, was not the civilest in the

world. But come, come—when men grow ould they always get cranky. We ought to make allowances. God knows, neither you nor I, when we come to his years, will be able to kick up such a rookawn ;”* and he smiled and nodded at me ; while Roderick, who was making himself up for mischief, impatiently exclaimed in a voice almost smothered by passion—

“ Who the devil are you ? What do you mean ! What do you want ? ”

“ Faith, and I can answer you all. My name, Charles Coolaghan, of the South Cork—my maning, that you insulted my friend ; and my business, a written apology. But come, we won’t be too hard—We’ll try and plaister it up without burning powder. Say ye were drunk. Do what my young friend asks, and there will be no more about it.”

Roderick who had with great difficulty waited for the close of the ambassador’s address now awfully exploded.

“ Captain Coolaghan, sir. There is one thing I regret.”

“ Arrah, stop, general. It must be on paper—just for the sake of form. We won’t publish it. We won’t up on my honour.”

“ Blood and thunder ! Hear me, sir. What I regret is, that I did not knock out the scoundrel’s brains ; and if your business is in any way connected with him, I beg, sir, you’ll oblige me with your absence.”

“ Well, upon my conscience,” returned he of the South Cork, “ a more unchristian kind of an ould gintleman I never talked to ! You—with one foot in the grave—arrah, for the sake of your poor sowl, you ought to make atonement. Come, give us what we want—write the apology—say you were drunk—and—”

“ Why you infernal scoundrel ! ” Up jumped the captain—up rose the general—I flung myself between them. Coolaghan had seized his cane—Roderick grasped his crutch—while Phil Clancy, hearing the fresh uproar,

* *Anglice*, scene of confusion.

rushed into the room, and was directed by his master to exclude the visiter, and that too, if necessary, *vi et armis*. The captain slowly retired, notifying his wrath as he departed.

"Ye ould firebrand—sure gout and age should have taken the divil out of ye before this. Killing waiters—murdering a whole company—and when gintlemen sind for satisfaction, nothing but the grossest abuse! But I'll have ye out. Troth I'll parade ye on the fifteen acres; ay, if you come hopping there upon that wooden prop;—or if ye don't, I'll post ye over Ireland—ye can-tankerous—ould—desperate—"

The rest was lost in his descent of the staircase; but the terrific slam of the hall-door told plainly enough, that Captain Coolaghan of the South Cork had "exited" in a rage.

"Pat," said the commander, as he endeavoured to recover breath, "bring me my pistols. If any more of these ruffians come, I'll shoot them though I hang for it. Holy Mary!" and he crossed himself devoutly. "What sins have I committed, that a poor, quiet, easy-tempered old man can't in his last days, his own house, and a land of liberty, remain in his afflictions, without being tortured by a gang of villains, who first beg, then try robbery, and if you don't submit to plunder, coolly propose your assassination?"

A thundering rap interrupted the *jérémiade* of the unfortunate commander. Up ran Phil Clancy pale as a ghost.

"Another of them divils, that was here this morning," quoth the valet.

"Let him up"—replied the general, while his brows contracted, and his look bespoke desperate determination. "Let him up. If I miss him with the crutch, do you, Pat, knock him down with the poker." And Puffenberg's confederate prepared for action, and I to witness the termination of a scene that at present was strange and inexplicable.

The door opened—a very fashionable-looking dragoon presented himself—inquired "if General O'Dogherty was at home?" and on being answered in the

affirmative, begged to have "Captain Hay of the Fifteenth" announced as having called. Roderick, with more politeness than I expected, after his recent visitations, struck with the superior manner and address of the new comer, requested him to take a chair, and then intimated that the general was present. The dragoon looked rather sceptically at the commander, and then turned his eyes on me.

"Really, gentlemen," he said, "I feel myself a little puzzled. You, sir," as he addressed me, "seem far too young to have attained that honourable standing in the army. And you, sir," and he turned to Roderick, "much too infirm for the extraordinary exertions which last night's affair at Darcy's must have required."

The commander stared—while a faint and glimmering notion of the business flashed across my mind. Of course I kept my suspicions to myself, and the general testily, but politely, entreated the captain of cavalry to be more explicit.

"May I inquire, in the first place, which is the general?"

The commander, with great dignity, announced himself to be the real Simon Pure.

"There must be a palpable mistake in the whole business;" and the light dragoon laughed. "May I ask, without intending the slightest disrespect, if you supped at Darcy's last night?"

"Supped at the devil!" exclaimed the admirer of Baron Puffenberg. "Sir, I beg your pardon. Excuse my being irritable. Bad gout, sir. Saints would swear under half the provocation I have endured since day-break. You'll forgive me?"

The captain smiled and bowed.

"My dear sir," continued Roderick, "I have not been out of my house these three months."

"Then," said the dragoon, "my conjectures are correct; and it is impossible that you could be the gentleman who knocked down Captain Edwards, blackened Mr. Heywood's eye, and broke the waiter's arm with a chair."

My worthy kinsman repeated the charges catego-

rically in a tone of voice so ludicrous, that neither Captain Hay nor I could refrain from laughing; and then added,

"Really, sir, I am astonished, and at a loss to know why such inquiry should be made of me."

"The simplest reply, sir," returned the dragoon, "will be given in the Hibernian style, by asking another question. Pray, sir, is this card yours?" and he handed one to the friend of Puffenberg.

The general rubbed the glasses of his spectacles, and examined the ticket attentively; and then with a look of unqualified surprise replied,

"It is mine—mine beyond a question!"

"Some one then has used your name and address with great freedom," observed Captain Hay.

"That person, if my suspicions be correct, shall rue his freedom dearly;" and the old man knit his brows and desired me to ring for Clancy. He came; and the commander asked for his card-case. It was brought, and opened. No ticket of his was to be found; for those within were inscribed with Hector's name and residence. Conviction rested on the general's mind, and Clancy, ignorant of the consequences, sealed my cousin's fate. "Mr. Hector," he said, "had been fiddling with the case." Such, indeed, was the fact. The unlucky youth, struck with the similarity between his uncle's and his own, had been examining the cases, put the wrong one in his pocket, and in the confusion of the preceding evening, had flung those of Baron Puffenberg's contemporary to his antagonists, and never discovered the mistake until the blunder had cost him an inheritance.

As to the quarrel at Darcy's—as well as I can now remember the wind up—it terminated in Capt. Coolaghan losing a finger and Hector a new hat—while one of the Connaught gentlemen, who had so handsomely volunteered his services on that fatal evening, was duly cased in lead and transmitted to the abbey of Burashool, there to repose in peace with a long and distinguished ancestry.

While these important events were being transacted,

Roderick was no idler. For a fortnight he was denied to his acquaintances, and as Phil Clancy whispered, "was writing continually;" for, as it subsequently appeared, he was engaged in altering his will, and cutting off his unlucky nephew with a shilling, which he had the barbarity to have regularly tendered to him by his attorney. But the poor lad did not live to feel the effects of an uncle's wrath, produced by his own imprudence. He quarrelled at a hazard-table with a ruffian; he and his antagonists were men of a similar stamp—both were blacklegs, and both bullies—they adjourned of course to the field—and Hector fell.

I have only to add, that the friend and admirer of Baron Puffenberg, even after death, contrived to keep up his relatives in feuds and litigation. He left a most voluminous and unintelligible will; and in it bequeathed his property to three old maids, two grand-nephews, a cousin, and a priest: with a sum to found a friary, and a large bequest to form a fund for supplying masses for the repose of his soul. Me, he cut off one morning that I had unwittingly displeased him, with a legacy of one thousand pounds—a donation for which he expressly provided, and which, as it turned out, was the only legacy paid. For so confused and contradictory were the remainder, and so ingeniously did one provision nullify the next one, that of course the property was thrown into chancery, and there it continues to this day.

If Roderick's deliverance from purgatory depended on the payment of the mass fund, all I can say is, that there he lies, snug and warm!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RIVAL ARMIES.

By heaven ! it is a splendid sight to see,
 For one who hath no friend, no brother there,
 Their rival scarfs of mixed embroidery,
 Their various arms that glitter in the air !

* * * * *
 Three hosts combine to offer sacrifice ;
 Three tongues prefer strange orisons on high ;
 Three gaudy standards flout the pale blue skies ;
 The shouts are—France, Spain, Albion, Victory !

CHILDE HAROLD.

A MONTH had passed away, and O'Connor was in another land. The embarkation at Portsmouth of a large reinforcement for the several battalions of his regiment, cantoned on the banks of the Douro, was promptly effected. The wind was favourable ; and as it blew half a gale from the time they cleared the Channel, the transports anchored in the Tagus on the sixth evening from that on which they had lost sight of the chalk-cliffs of Britain.

A new scene had opened on O'Connor. The bustle of an approaching campaign occupied his thoughts ; and, in martial preparation, he strove to forget the disappointment his rejection by Mary Howard had occasioned.

Nothing could equal the enthusiastic ardour with which the British soldiery looked forward to the recommencement of active operations ; nothing could surpass their high discipline ; and the organization of the army was complete. During the period they had remained in winter cantonments, every arm of the force had been perfected, and the *matériel* of the English army was magnificent. Powerful reinforcements, including the

life and horse guards, had joined; and Lord Wellington crossed the Douro with nineteen regiments of cavalry, splendidly equipped and mounted. The infantry, recruited from the corps at home and volunteers from the militias, were vigorous and effective; the artillery was powerful and complete in every requisite for the field; while an experienced commissariat and well-regulated means of transport, facilitated the operations of the most perfect and serviceable force with which, since the days of Marlborough, a British general had opened a campaign.

Never did a commander take the field under more glorious auspices. Supported by numerous bodies of native troops, and assisted by the most daring of the guerilla leaders, Wellington broke up from his cantonments with summer before him, and a rich and luxurious country through which to direct his line of march. His troops were flushed with victory—his opponents depressed from constant discomfiture. The opening movements indicated this feeling strongly. The French were already retrograding; the British preparing to advance. No wonder then the brilliant hopes of that splendid army were fully realised; and the glorious career of English conquest almost continued without a check, until the fields of France saw its banners float in victory; and the last struggles at Ortez and Toulouse attest the invincibility of Wellington!

Whilst the British were preparing to march, the army of the centre, under Joseph Bonaparte, followed by those of "the South," and "Portugal," retired slowly on the Ebro. As they were not pressed by the British light troops, the French corps moved leisurely along their route, accompanied by an immense train of equipages and baggage. The appearance of the whole army was picturesque and imposing, from the gayety of its equipment and the variety of its costume. Excepting the infantry of the line and the light battalions, few of the French regiments were similarly dressed. The horse artillery wore uniforms of light blue, braided with black lace; the heavy cavalry were arrayed in green coats, with brass helmets. The chasseurs and hussars, mount-

ed on slight but active horses, were variously and showily equipped. The *gendarmerie-à-cheval*—a picked body, chosen from the cavalry in general, had long blue frocks, with buff belts and cocked hats—while the *élite* of the dragoon regiments, selected for their superior size and height, wore bearskin caps, and presented a fierce and martial appearance.

The regiments of the line had each their grenadier and voltigeur company; and even the light corps were provided with a company of the former. The appearance of the whole force was soldierly and effective—the cavalry was indeed superb—the artillery excellent, their caissons, guns and harness in excellent order, and the horses in the highest condition.

Though the rival armies were in discipline and efficiency to all appearance perfect, a practised soldier would remark a striking dissimilarity in the *matériel* of their respective equipment. Every thing attached to the British was simple, compact, and limited as far as its being serviceable would admit; while the French corps was encumbered in its march with useless equipages, and burdened with accumulated plunder. That portion of the Spanish noblesse which had acknowledged the usurper now accompanied his retreat—state functionaries in court dresses and embroidery mingled with the troops—calashes with wives and mistresses moved between brigades of guns—while nuns from Castile and ladies from Andalusia, mounted on horseback and attired *en militaire*, deserted convent and castle, to follow the fortunes of some “bold dragoon.” Never was an army, save that of Moscow, so overloaded with spoil and baggage, as that of Joseph Bonaparte with which he retired upon Vittoria.

Though the circumstance had neither escaped the observation or animadversion of its officers, the retreating columns as yet had experienced but little difficulty in transporting the unwieldy ambulances which contained more spoil than trophies. Looking upon Spain as a hostile country, the means necessary to forward their convoys were unscrupulously seized, and every horse and mule was considered to be the property of the

finder. The roads were good—the retreat unmolested. Even on the 16th no enemy had appeared; and to all appearance the allies remained quietly in their cantonments. The apathy of the English general was extraordinary, and many a prisoner was tauntingly asked by his French escort, “was Lord Wellington asleep?”

Nothing, indeed, could equal the astonishment of the usurper, when informed on the evening of the 18th, that the allies were in considerable force on the left bank of the Ebro! All the French arrangements were overthrown, and an instant night-march was rendered unavoidable. The drums beat to arms—the baggage was hastily put in motion—and the whole army which had been collected in Pancorbo, or bivouacked in its immediate vicinity, defiled towards the city of Vittoria.

The point on which the corps of Joseph Bonaparte had concentrate, is situate on the great road leading from Burgos to Bayonne. It is defended by a strong fort placed on a commanding eminence, which the French occupied with a regiment. A narrow valley, surrounded by rocky heights and crossed by a mountain torrent, affords barely space for the road which traverses it; and the scenery was singularly contrasted with the rich country the retreating army had just abandoned, for nothing could be more savage, rugged, and uncultivated.

Vittoria, on which the French fell back, is in picturesque situation second to no city in Spain. Placed on a gentle eminence, a level champaign country immediately surrounds it, encircled in the distance by a mountain ridge. On the north west, the Zadorra is crossed by several bridges; while on the other side, a bold and commanding chain of heights overhangs the road leading to Pampeluna. Across the valley, which there becomes gradually enlarged, are the villages of Gamarra Major and Abechaca, while the beautiful river ranges over a fine and cultivated scene, giving to the environs of Vittoria a rich yet romantic character.

There, after a harassing march of thirty miles, the army of the South halted on the evening of the 18th. A more confused and crowded place could not be

imagined, and it displayed a strange medley of magnificence and discomfort. Earlier in the evening the court of Joseph, his staff and guards, the head quarters of "the centre," convoys and equipages, cavalry and artillery occupied the buildings, and crowded the streets; while every hour increased the confusion, as portions of the executive and military departments flocked in, and formed an embarrassing addition to an unmanageable mass of soldiers and civilians, already far too numerous to find accommodation in a town unequal to shelter half that number which occupied it now.

But yet a stranger scene was enacting at Vittoria. While the city was brilliantly illuminated, in honour of the visit of the king, and a gayer sight could not be fancied than its sparkling interior presented, beyond the walls an army was taking its position, and a multitude of wretched serfs were employed at the point of the bayonet, in throwing up field defences, and assisting those who ruled them with an iron hand, to place their guns in battery, and make the other military dispositions to repel the very force that had come for their deliverance.

CHAPTER XV.

OPENING OF THE CAMPAIGN—AFFAIR OF ST. MILLAN—THE
BIVOUAC.

Perish the man whose mind is backward now !

KING HENRY V.

No movement in the Peninsular campaign brings to the retired soldier more interesting reminiscences, than the rapid advance of the British army, from the time it crossed the Douro on the 1st of June until it halted on the evening of the 19th on the banks of the Bayas.

By the able manœuvring of Lord Wellington, Joseph Bonaparte had been obliged to abandon his line of communication with the capital, and fall back on Burgos to concentrate. Contrary to the expectation of the French their retreat was unmolested ; and it was considered very doubtful whether the English commander would break up from his cantonments and become assailant.

But they mistook the man when they imagined that Wellington intended to remain inactive. With characteristic celerity his whole army was put in motion, and the Douro, the Carrion, and the Pisuerga were crossed successively. A demonstration was made on Burgos, and the French were obliged to retire from the place and blow up its defences. Unopposed, the fiery chief reached the valley of the Ebro—and by a route considered by Napoleon's officers impracticable for the movement of an army, pressing forward without delay, he crossed the bridges of the river and established himself on the left bank.

It can hardly be imagined what additional interest this operation, brilliant equally in its execution and results, acquired from the nature of the country across which the line of march passed. The scenery was beautiful and diversified, displaying a singular combination of romantic wildness with exquisite fertility. One while, the columns moved through luxurious valleys intersprinkled with hamlets, vineyards, and flower-gardens; at another, they struggled up mountain ridges, or pressed through Alpine passes overhung with toppling cliffs, making it almost difficult to decide whether the rugged chasm which they traversed had been rifted from the hill-side by an earthquake, or scarped by the hand of man. If the eye turned downwards, there lay sparkling rivers and sunny dells; above, rose naked rocks and splintered precipices; while moving masses of glittering soldiery, now lost, now seen, amid the windings of the route, gave a panoramic character to the whole, that never will fade from the memory of him who saw it.

Some sharp fighting occurred on the 18th, between the light troops of the rival armies; and two retreating brigades of the enemy were overtaken and brought to action by the rifles and 52d. The affair terminated on the French part, in the loss of much baggage and some three hundred prisoners, although Jourdan, by attacking the British left at Oşma, thought to impede the advance of the allies, and afford sufficient time for his own column retiring from Frias to rejoin the main body without loss.

There is nothing more exciting in warfare, than when a small portion of an army operates in the presence of the whole. The feeling that their comrades' eyes are turned on them, stimulates the combatants; while an intense anxiety for the success of their brethren in arms, animates the coldest of the lookers on. This was strongly experienced during the short but decisive struggle on the heights of St. Millan. Although the ground was most unfavourable for an assault, nothing could surpass the splendid style in which the light brigade attacked the enemy. The road by which

it was necessary to advance, was rugged, steep, and narrow, overhung with crags and underwood, while a mountain-stream protected the French front, and some straggling houses increased the difficulty of advancing, by affording cover to the voltigeurs who had formed behind them. After a sharp fusillade the enemy gave ground, and the light brigade was pressing forward, when suddenly, a fresh column debouched from a ravine, and appeared upon the flank of the assailants. Both rushed on to gain the crest of the hill—and both reached the plateau together. The 52d, bringing their left flank forward in a run, faced round and charged with the bayonet. The conflict was momentary, the French broke, threw away their knapsacks, and fled for the adjoining high grounds; while a wild cheer from the supporting regiment—near enough to witness but not assist in the defeat—bore a soldier's tribute to the gallantry of their companions.

It was the first time that many of the young men who accompanied O'Connor from England had been "under fire," and seen hostile shots exchanged; and as the casualties had been trifling, there was no drawback to damp the *éclat* of a successful affair. Never indeed did a young soldier commence a campaign, whose "starry influences" were more auspicious. The weather was fine—the country through which the line of march lay, rich and picturesque—the troops moved as men move to victory—while a friendly population every where hailed the approach of their deliverers. The peasantry received them with "*vivas*"—the Spanish girl met them with her tambourine and castanets—while the nuns, leaving relic and rosary to gaze upon the glittering bands as they defiled in quick succession, showered rose-leaves from the convent gates; or, if the building was too distant from the line of march, waved, with their white veils, a welcome to the conquerors.

The spot where the rifles bivouacked after the affair of Saint Millan was a wild and romantic valley upon the bank of a bright and rapid stream. The French had occupied it the preceding evening, and, with the variableness of war, the victors established themselves

in the same cantonment that but a few hours before had been tenanted by the vanquished. It is marvellous with what celerity soldiers arrange their resting-places. Within an hour from the time the advance halted, the mules were up, the baggage unpacked, fires lighted, and supper in full preparation. No delay impeded these important operations; the whole of the martial community were actively employed—one carried wood—another watched the camp kettle; this man mended his shoe—that one cleaned his musket; all were busy—while the light and careless jest, which occasionally elicited a roar of laughter, might have been expected rather from a peaceful merry-making, than from men after a sharp encounter, and preparing for a more decisive conflict on to-morrow.

In the ruined shell of a goatherd's hovel, a party of some seven or eight of the rifles had cantoned themselves for the night. Their beds were laid around the walls, a tablecloth was spread in the centre of the floor, each quickly produced the necessary implements for attacking the contents of the camp-kettle; and as all had contributed to the *cuisine*, the mess presented a strange combination of different viands, united in one general *mélange*. Men engaged warmly in the morning with an enemy are not fastidious in gastronomy in the evening; and an olio that would have poisoned an alderman, comprising salt and fresh beef, fowls, rice, vegetables and a hare, was pronounced exquisite. Each from the grand depot selected the food his heart loved; while a large skin-bottle of country wine, and divers flasks and canteens filled with rum and brandy, indicated that due precautions had been taken to ensure a merry night. When the meal ended, the kettle and its contents passed to the uses of the domestics, who had formed a rude bivouac beneath a spreading sycamore.

"Fill, lads—fill a high bumper," said the senior officer of the group who tenanted the ruins of the goatherd's hut. "Here's green tufts and short barrels. I never was prouder of my brave lights than to-day; our success was decisive, and our casualties but few."

"Poor Robinson!—His was a short career. He fell at the very moment that victory was certain."

"Then," said Major O'Connor, "he fell where the brave should. Come, George—thou hast for the first time heard a bullet hiss! What think you of a smart affair like that of Saint Millan?"

"Think!" replied the enthusiastic boy, for the speaker had scarcely reached sixteen, "I think that the only thing on earth worth living for, is such a scene as the one I shared in this morning."

"Right, boy"—and O'Connor sighed heavily. "What are the tamer occupations of peaceful life, compared with the brave and brief career the soldier runs? That wild hurra that echoed through the mountain passes, when the French were driven from their heights—what mortal sounds could thrill the heart as they did? Ay, George, let sluggard spirits dream their life away, the brave alone feel that rapturous excitement which makes existence tolerable."

O'Brien stole a side glance at the speaker; the eye was fired—the cup was at his lips—but yet, even in that maddening hour of high excitement after victory, the worm was gnawing a breast that seemed steeled to softer influences.

"How delightful," said another of the neophytes, who had landed but a few days before from England, "is this wild mode of life! Have we not all that man can desire! and a newness and uncertainty that make it doubly agreeable? Here we are cantoned for the night, and heaven alone can tell where we shall bivouac to-morrow."

"Yes, Aylmer," replied O'Brien; "a summer campaign is not objectionable; but O'Connor could probably inform you that there are times when a bivouac is not so agreeable. Do you remember when we were hutted at Alcanza?"

The major smiled.

"Yes, Dennis; our accommodations were not just so comfortable."

"I shall never forget the last night we occupied that infernal outpost. It was the morning after Busaco, when Massena, repulsed in every attempt to force our mountain position, endeavoured to turn it by marching

in the direction of the road to Oporto. Of course a correspondent movement on our part was indispensable; and on the 29th of September we retreated upon the lines of Torres Vedras. We reached our intrenchments with little molestation, and there occupied the cantonments, where we were afterwards obliged to winter.

"From the perfect state of the lines, an assault upon them was utterly hopeless; and after a careful *reconnaissance*, Junot abandoned all idea of forcing the defences, and changed his operations to a blockade. Nothing could exceed the privations which the French soldiers endured in their miserable cantonments. With scarcely any shelter from the inclemency of winter weather—food in scanty supplies, and of the most wretched description imaginable—disease gaining ground—desertions every day more numerous—while the mortality among the horses was tremendous, as from a scarcity of forage the poor animals were obliged to feed on rotten straw and vine-twigs. Our situation was better than that of the enemy, particularly in being tolerably supplied with corn and provisions; but as to the huts, I suspect both parties were pretty nearly on a par. We certainly, as they say in Ireland, "kept open house," for the wind and rain entered at every corner.

"Our habitation was constructed of sods, old boards, and branches, and thatched with heather. Straw was too scarce to be obtained; and the heath we substituted for it, whenever the rain fell heavily, was pervious every where. The inside of our wigwam, although the dimensions were limited, contained seven officers and a brace of grayhounds; while the beds, comprising stretchers, mattresses, a bear-skin and two or three trusses of straw were arranged round the walls, leaving a space in the centre for the rude apology which a shattered door formed for a table. When the night was wet, it was amusing to see the different expedients that each man resorted to, and the ingenious contrivances devised to obtain shelter from the rain. Some extended their blankets upon upright sticks, and stowed themselves beneath it; others put their faith in the table-cloth as a canopy. But these contrivances, however, were generally found wanting;

when fully saturated, the cloths brought down the sticks, and the sleeper had the whole collection of water in one plump, and instead of receiving it by the drop, he got it by the gallon. Llewellyn, the little Welshman who was killed at Badajos, was the most comical figure upon earth, as he sat on a truss of straw in the corner, under a tattered umbrella—while O'Shaughnessy and Daly, wrapped in their cloaks, remained all night stoutly at the table, discussing brandy punch, and playing "spoiled five," from a pack of cards reduced to twenty-seven, and whose backs, from divers stains, were to both just as familiar as their faces were. But the last night topped all. The roof, surcharged with moisture, became too weighty for its frail supports, and down it came upon the unhappy community; and men and dogs—sleepers and card-players—were all involved in one general ruin. Poor Daly—a six-pound shot closed his account at Salamanca—roared lustily for help. O'Shaughnessy in vain struggled to liberate himself from a ton of wet heather. The little Welshman was all but smothered under his own umbrella; while the dogs, believing themselves assaulted, bit the legs of the man next the peg they were secured to. Gradually, however, all got disentangled from the wreck, and obtained a lodging from their comrades, who, like ourselves, were huddled at this execrable outpost."

"Ah!" said O'Connor, "that is not the kind of concern that Edwards would fancy. His bivouac must be a *cottage ornée*, with a murmuring rivulet and a vineyard in full bearing. The casements should be trellised with ever-blowing roses, while grapes and oranges ripened against the wall, and he had merely to open the window to gather a dessert."

There was a laugh at the romantic picture the young soldier had drawn of campaigning—the goatskin bottle was nearly finished—one after another the revellers stretched themselves on their humble resting-places—in half an hour the bivouac was silent as a peaceful hamlet, and its occupants slept calmly, as if no struggle had occurred that day, and no battle was expected on the morrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

VITTORIA.

MESSENGER. The English are embattled, you French peers.

CONSTABLE. To horse, you gallant soldiers! straight to horse

KING HENRY V.

Stroke and thrust, and flash, and cry
 For quarter or for victory,
 Mingle there with the volleying thunder,
 Which makes the distant city wonder
 How the sounding battle goes,
 If with them, or for their foes.

SIEGE OF CORINTH.

SOME rain had fallen during the night, but a lovelier morning than the 21st of June never broke. The sun rose brilliantly, and the blue sky was cloudless. On either side all was prepared for a conflict—a battle was inevitable—the English commander being resolved to offer, and the French marshal to accept the combat.

The enemy's position was well chosen, but it was rather too extended—on one side it rested on the heights of La Puebla, and on the other occupied the ridge above Gamarra Major. The French order of battle embraced two lines—the armies of Portugal and the South were in the first, and the cavalry and army of the centre were placed in the second in reserve. The entire, with the exception of a small corps, were drawn out in front of Vittoria, and formed on the left bank of the Zadorra, which sweeping round the whole position rendered it truly formidable.

While the front was defended by the river, the great roads to Bayonne and Pampeluna, in the event of any disaster, offered every facility for retreating. In many

respects the French position at Vittoria was excellent; the communications were direct, and not liable to obstruction; the artillery were in battery, and a large proportion covered by a field-work in the weakest point (the centre,) near the village of Gomecha; while the plains around Vittoria offered every advantage for the operations of cavalry; and that arm of Joseph's concentrated force was both numerous and well appointed.

The only means of attack upon the centre of the French position, was by crossing the bridge of the Zadorra, and they were in every place commanded by the guns, and open to a charge of cavalry. Every thing that could cover an enemy's advance had been carefully removed, and few beside British soldiers would have dared to bring on an action, where so many difficulties were to be encountered in the very opening of the contest.

Soon after the action commenced, Joseph placed himself upon a rising ground that overlooked his right and centre. His own guard were formed in his rear, and a numerous and splendid staff surrounded him. Wellington had chosen an eminence commanding the right bank of the Zadorra, and directly in front of the village of Arinez. Dressed in a short gray coat closely buttoned, his Spanish sash and plumed hat alone marked his rank. He remained for a long time on foot; and while the contest on the heights of Puebla continued doubtful, his glass was turned almost exclusively upon that point, as he watched the progress of the contest with the same coolness with which he would have regarded the manœuvres of a review.

There never was during the Peninsular campaigns a battle that required nicer combinations and a more correct calculation in time and movements than that of Vittoria. It was impossible to bring up to the immediate proximity for attack every portion of his numerous army, and hence many of Wellington's brigades had bivouacked at a considerable distance from the Zadorra. Part of the country before Vittoria was difficult and rocky; hamlets, enclosures, and ravines, separating the columns from each other. Some of them were obliged

to move by narrow and broken roads, and arrangements, perfect in themselves, were liable to embarrassment from numerous contingencies. But the genius that could plan these extended operations, could also remedy fortuitous events, if such occurred.

The attack commenced by Hill's division moving soon after daylight by the Miranda road, and the detaching of Morilla's Spanish corps to carry the heights of La Puebla, and drive in the left flank of the enemy. The task was a difficult one. The ground rose abruptly from the valley, and towering to a considerable height, presented a sheer ascent that at first sight appeared almost impracticable. The Spaniards, with great difficulty, although unopposed, reached the summit; and there among rocks and broken ground became sharply engaged with the French left. Unable however to force the enemy from the heights. Sir Rowland detached a British brigade to Morilla's assistance, while, alarmed for the safety of his flank, Jourdan detached troops from his centre to support it. A fierce and protracted combat ensued, and Colonel Cadogan fell at the head of his brigade. Gradually and steadily the British gained ground; and while the eyes of both armies were turned upon the combatants, and the possession of the heights seemed doubtful, the eagle glance of Wellington discovered the forward movement of the Highland tartans, and he announced to his staff that La Puebla was his own.

To support the attack upon the heights, O'Callaghan's brigade of the second division crossed the river and assaulted Sabijana de Alava. Notwithstanding a sharp resistance the place was carried most gallantly; but as the village was in advance, the French made repeated efforts to repossess it. The British, however, held it bravely, until the centre and left having closed up enabled the English general to make a decisive movement of the whole line.

Meanwhile the light divisions had left the road, and formed in close columns behind rocks and broken ground at some distance from the river. The hussar brigade remained dismounted on the left; while the fourth divi-

sion deployed to the right, and took its position for attack. The heavy cavalry were in reserve to support the centre, should support be required before the third and seventh came up and occupied ground on the left flank. During this time the first and fifth divisions, a Spanish and Portuguese corps, and a strong body of dragoons, were marched from Murgua, to place themselves on the road to Saint Sebastian, and there cut off the enemy's retreat.

While O'Callaghan's brigade was repeatedly attacked in Sabljana de Alava, and some anxiety was caused from the delay of the centre and their exposed position, the opening of Sir Thomas Graham's cannonade announced that the battle had commenced on the left. Presently Lord Dalhousie notified his arrival at Mendonza with the third and seventh divisions, and Lord Wellington ordered a general attack on the whole of the French position.

The light division moved under cover of a thicket and placed itself opposite the enemy's right centre, about two hundred paces from the bridge of Villoses. On the arrival of Lord Dalhousie the signal was given to advance; and at the moment a Spaniard announced that one of the bridges had been left undefended. The mistake was quickly seized upon. A brigade, led by the first rifles, crossed it in a run, and without loss established itself in a deep ravine, where it was protected from the cannonade.

Nothing could be more beautiful than the operations which followed. The light division carried the bridge of Nanclaus, and the fourth that of Tres Puentes—the divisions of Picton and Dalhousie followed, and the battle became general. The passage of the river—the movement of glittering masses from right to left far as the eye could range—the deafening roar of cannon—the sustained fusilade of the infantry—all was grand and imposing—while the English cavalry displayed in glorious sunshine, and formed in line to support the columns, completed a spectacle, that to a military observer would be unequalled.

Although perfect success had attended the combined

movements of the different brigades, the village of Arinez resisted every attack, and even the 88th were repulsed in a daring attempt to storm it. This, probably, was the doubtful struggle of the day, and the French fought desperately. Their artillery played at point-blank distance—the village was filled with infantry—the whole place was shrouded in smoke, while the hissing of shot and bursting of shells added to the terrors of the scene.

But this was but a momentary check. Wellington in person directed a fresh assault—the 45th and 74th were led forward, and Arinez carried with the bayonet.

While the battle was raging in the front, the flank movement on the Gamarra Major and Abechuco was being executed by the first and fifth divisions. The bridges in front of these villages had been fortified and were obstinately retained; but when the centre was forced at Vittoria, their defenders gave way, and Lord Lynedoch occupied them.

The whole of the enemy's first line were now driven back—but they retired in perfect order, and re-forming close to Vittoria, presented an imposing front protected by nearly one hundred pieces of artillery. A tremendous fire checked the advance of the left centre, and the storm of the guns on both sides raged with unabated fury for an hour. Vittoria, although so near the combatants, was hidden from view by the dense smoke, while volley after volley from the French infantry, thinned though it could not shake Picton's "fighting third." But it was a desperate and final effort. The allies were advancing in beautiful order, and confusion was visible in the enemy's ranks, as their left attempted to retire by *échelons* of divisions, a movement badly executed. Presently the cannon were abandoned—and the whole mass of troops commenced retreating by the road to Pampeluna. The sun was setting, and his last rays fell upon a magnificent spectacle—the red masses of infantry were seen advancing steadily across the plain—the horse artillery at a gallop to the front, to open its fire on the fugitives—the hussar brigade were charging by the Camino Real—while the second

division, having overcome every obstacle and driven the enemy from its front, was extending over the heights upon the right in line, its arms and appointments flashing gloriously in the fading sunshine of "departing day."

Never had an action been more general, nor the attacks in every part of an extended position, more simultaneous and successful. In the line of operations six bridges over the Zadorra, were crossed or stormed. That on the road to Burgos enabled Lord Hill to pass; the fourth division crossed that of Nanclaus; the light, at Tres Puentes; Picton and Dalhousie passed the river lower down; while Lord Lynedoch carried Abachuco and Gamarra Major, though both were strongly fortified and both obstinately defended.

From a hillock on the other side of Vittoria Wellington viewed the retreating enemy and urged forward his own troops in pursuit. What a sight to meet a conqueror's eye! Beneath him the valley was covered for a mile with straggling fugitives—for the French army had totally lost its formation, and neither attempted to rally even or check the pursuit of the British. The horse artillery were already posted on an adjacent height, showering upon the crowd below them a storm of shot and shells—the light troops and cavalry still pressed forward—while around, the entire *matériel* of an army was scattered as it had been left, and the whole of a magnificent park, with the exception of a few guns, abandoned to the victors. Night alone closed the pursuit—and favoured by the broken ground the shattered battalions of the usurper effected their escape. The *déroute* was perfect—and two leagues from the town the fiery chief reluctantly ceased to follow, as darkness and previous fatigue rendered further operations impossible. The advance bivouacked on the ground where they halted; and Wellington returning slowly to Vittoria, entered it at nine at night.

Never had defeat been more decisive than that which the pseudo king sustained. An army, complete in every arm, was totally dispersed; and though the prisoners bore but a small proportion to the killed and

wounded, that could be ascribed alone to the rapidity with which the French retired, abandoning every thing that could impede their flight, and favoured by a rugged surface, broken roads, and seasonable darkness. Through streets thronged by a victorious soldiery and choked with captured equipages, the English commander and his weary staff rode slowly to their quarters; and the same city that, but two nights since, had illuminated in honour of the king of Spain, was blazing now to welcome the conqueror of the usurper.

On the morning of the 22d, the field of battle and the roads for some miles in the rear exhibited an appearance it seldom falls within human power to witness. There lay the wreck of a mighty army; while plunder accumulated during the French successes, and wrung from every part of Spain with unsparing rapacity, was recklessly abandoned to any one who chose to seize it. Cannon and caissons, carriages and tumbrels, wagons of every description were overturned or deserted, and a stranger *mélange* could not be imagined, than these enormous convoys presented to the eye. Here was the personal baggage of a king—there the scenery and decorations of a theatre. Minutions of war were mixed with articles of *virtu*; and with scattered arms and packs, silks, embroidery, plate, and jewels, mingled in wild disorder. One wagon was loaded with money—the next with cartridges; and wounded soldiers, deserted women, and children of every age, every where implored assistance or protection. Here a lady was overtaken in her carriage—in the next calash, was an actress or *fille-de-chambre*, while droves of oxen were roaming over the plain, intermingled with an endless quantity of sheep and goats, mules and horses, asses and milch cows.

That much valuable plunder came into the hands of the soldiery is certain; but the better portion fell to the peasantry and the camp followers. Two valuable captures were secured—a full military chest, and the baton of Marshal Jourdon.

Were not the indiscriminating system of spoliation adopted by the French armies recollected, the enormous

collection of plunder abandoned at Vittoria would appear incredible. From the highest to the lowest, all were bearing off some valuables from the country they had overrun. Even the king himself had not prove an exception; for, rolled in the imperials of his own carriage, some of the finest pictures from the royal galleries were discovered. To facilitate their transport they had been removed from their frames, and were destined by the usurper to add to the unrivalled collection, that, by similar means, had been abstracted from the continent to centre in the Louvre. Wellington, however, interrupted the Spanish paintings in their transit, and the formality of a restoration.

CHAPTER XVII.

MOUNTAIN COMBAT—FRENCH BIVOUAC—MILITARY REMINISCENCES.

KING RICHARD.—Up with my tent : here will I lie to-night;
But where to-morrow ?—Well, all's one for that.
SHAKESPEARE.

AFTER the defeat of Joseph Bonaparte a brilliant continuation of successes attended the British arms. Passages and Paucorbo were taken, Pampeluna strictly blockaded, and the siege of Saint Sebastian commenced. Soult, after his appointment to the command, with a recruited army, endeavoured to succour these fortresses. A series of sanguinary combats in the Pyrenees terminated in his total discomfiture ; and, with severe loss on both sides, the French marshal was pursued across the frontier.

No operation could have been more brilliantly executed than the mountain march of the light division in pursuit of Soult's rear-guard, after he had been defeated before Pampeluna, and driven back upon the passes of the Bidassoa, which, but a few days before, he had forced in the full confidence of succeeding. The French army suffered heavily in their obstinate and repeated efforts to arrest the advance of the English general. On the 31st of July it continued retreating, while five British divisions pressed the pursuit vigorously by Roncesvalles, Maya, and Donna Maria. Nothing could equal the distress of the enemy—they were completely worn down ; and fatigued and disheartened as they were, the only wonder is that multitudes did not perish in the wild and rugged passes through which they were obliged to retire. Although rather in the rear of some

of the columns, the British light brigades were ordered forward to overtake the enemy, and, whenever they came up, bring them to immediate action. At midnight the bivouacs were abandoned—the division marched—and after nineteen hours' continued exertions, during which time a distance of nearly forty miles was traversed over Alpine heights and roads rugged and difficult beyond description, the enemy were overtaken and attacked. A short but smart affair ensued. To extricate the tail of the column and enable the wounded to get away, the French threw a portion of their rear-guard across the river. The rifles instantly attacked the reinforcement—a general fusillade commenced, and continued until night put an end to the affair, when the enemy retreated over the bridge of Yanzi, and the British pickets took possession of it. Both sides lost many men—and a large portion of French baggage fell into the hands of the pursuing force who had moved by St. Estevan.

That night the British light troops lay upon the ground; and next morning moved forward at daybreak. Debouching through the pass at Vera, the hill of Santa Barbara was crossed by the second brigade, while the rifles carried the heights of Echalar, which the French voltigeurs seemed determined to maintain. As the mountain was obscured by a thick fog, the firing had a strange appearance to those who witnessed it from the valley, occasional flashes only being seen, while every shot was repeated by a hundred echoes. At twilight the enemy's light infantry were driven in; but long after darkness fell the report of musketry continued, until after a few spattering shots a deathlike silence succeeded, and told that the last of the enemy had followed their companions, and abandoned the heights to their assailants.

The next march was but a short one. The light division had been dreadfully harassed for the three preceding days, and it was necessary that time should be allowed for the leading columns to arrive. Fortunately a commissary got up to the front that evening; and better still, some private supplies arrived most season-

ably. Soldiers speedily forget their past fatigues, and a very slight addition to their simple comforts dispels the recollection of the privations they have recently endured. Such was the case upon the night of the 4th of August, when the rifles found themselves in the bivouac that the French rear-guard had just quitted. As this post commanded a bridge and ravine, it had been occupied during Soult's advance and retreat—and with more comfort than such rude halting-places generally exhibit, the interior of the wood huts bore testimony to the taste and ingenuity of their late inhabitants.

The whole appearance of what had been a French bivouac for a fortnight was perfectly characteristic of that nation. Some clever contrivances for cooking, rude arm-racks, a rough table and benches to sit round it, still remained; while one gentleman had amused himself by drawing likenesses of British officers with a burnt stick, in which face, figure and costume were most ridiculously caricatured—while another, a votary of the gentle art of poesy, had immortalized the charms of his mistress in doggrel verses scratched upon the boards with the point of a bayonet.

As the party was unusually large, and there was no chance of the baggage being up for a day or two, "a ready furnished house," as an Irish servant termed the wooden hovel, was indeed a treasure. A fine clear stream was running before the hut; and, never imagining that they should be so unceremoniously ejected from their wooden habitation, the French had collected a quantity of billets for firing, and in their hurry off left a sheep and hare behind them. From the commissary a supply of brandy and biscuit had been obtained—and, at nightfall, a merrier party than that within the bivouac on the Torena never finished the contents of a canteen.

"Hurra! my boys!" exclaimed Major O'Shaughnessy, as he turned down a tin measure of brandy-and-water. "Here we are safe and sound—owners of a house fit for the summer residence of a London alderman—a deep drink for the taking—and such a dinner! Isn't Peter Bradly the devil at a stew? What a pity it was that his mother did not bind him to a pastry-cook!

Well—it was decent after all in them French fellows to leave us meat, fire, and lodging. They do now and again exhibit some civility.”

“Yes, they show a marked distinction in their treatment of us and our good allies,” said O’Brien. “It was strongly instanced this morning. While we were forcing the road, a company had scaled the rocks above it to dislodge the tirailleurs who were firing at us from the heights. A poor fellow of mine, whose complexion is uncommonly swarthy, was wounded in the leg and fell. Unfortunately two or three retreating Frenchmen passed accidentally the spot where he was lying, and mistaking him for a Portuguese sharpshooter, stabbed him in several places, and flung him over the precipice; while they raised his comrade from the ground, placed a knapsack under his head, and gave him a drink from a leathern bottle of excellent tinta, which one of them had slung across his shoulder. On coming up we found the sufferer stretched upon the road, and with difficulty he told us how he had been treated. We of course rendered him some assistance; but Sergeant Corrigan’s remarks, as he was binding a cloth round his fractured leg, turned our condolence into laughter. “There now,” he said, as he propped the wounded man against a rock—“there you are as snug as if you were in the barracks of Kilkenny. Didn’t I always tell ye, that yalla face of yours would bring you into trouble? No wonder the French mistook ye for a Portagee. It’s yourself that could travel from Badajos to Giberralthur, and you’re so like a native, the devil a dog would bark at you the whole way. If you get better, Barney dear, write for the priest’s lines,* that you were bred and born at Shannon-bridge, and ye can paste it on the back of ye’r knapsack.”

“An instance of French confidence occurred yesterday, after we debouched by Vera,” observed one of the lieutenants. “I was with a section of the company in the advance of the rest, when on turning a sudden angle of the road, we perceived not twenty yards off, a

* Lines, *Hibernice*, mean a certificate.

wounded voltigeur extended on the ground, and a young comrade supporting him. The Frenchman never attempted to retreat, but smiled when we came up as if he had been expecting us. 'Good morning,' he said, 'I have been waiting for you, gentlemen. My poor friend's leg is broken by a shot, and I could not leave him till you arrived, lest some of these Portuguese brigands should murder him. Pierre,' he continued, as he addressed his companion—'here are the brave English, and you will be taken care of. I will leave you a flask of water, and you will soon be succoured by our noble enemy. Gentlemen, will you honour me by emptying this canteen. You will find it excellent, for I took it from a portly friar two days ago.' There was no need to repeat the invitation. I set the example, the canteen passed from mouth to mouth, and the monk's brandy vanished. The conscript—for he had not joined above a month—replenished the flask with water from a spring just by. He placed it in his comrade's hand, bade him an affectionate farewell, bowed gracefully to us, threw his musket over his shoulder, and trotted off to join his regiment, which he pointed out upon a distant height. He seemed never for a moment to contemplate the possibility of our sending him in durance to the rear; and there were about him such kindness and confidence, that on our part no one ever dreamed of detaining him."

"There never was, and probably never will be," said Captain Mornington, "so powerful an example of the influence of national confidence and courtesy, remaining unimpaired even during the continuance of a ferocious engagement, as that which Talavera exhibits. No fighting could be more desperate than that which marked the meeting of the French and English. Victor, considering the heights occupied by Hill's division the key of the position, concluded, that if he could carry them, the remainder of the ground would then become untenable. To effect this, he resorted to a night attack.—Lapisse made a feint upon the centre, while Ruffin and Vilatte ascended the heights, and for a short time had them in their possession—but Hill recovered them with the bayonet, and repulsed another furious effort made

at midnight. Even though the French, by pretending they were Spaniards and deserters, penetrated the British line, they were driven back with frightful slaughter; and so desperately was this night-fighting carried on, that the assailants and the assailed frequently were engaged in a *mêlée* so close, that the men fought with clubbed muskets. All morning the battle raged, and the day assault was as unsuccessful as the night attack had proved. Both armies had lain upon the ground, but none slept—the trooper with his horse's bridle round his arm—the soldier in momentary expectation of a fresh attempt, listened in every noise for the enemy's approach. No wonder then that a sultry day in July found both sides overcome with heat and hunger—and by a sort of common consent, long before noon hostilities ceased, and the French cooked their dinners, while the English had wine and bread served out. Then it was, that a curious scene ensued. A small stream, tributary to the Tagus, flowed through a part of the battle ground, and separated the combatants. During the pause that the heat of the weather and the weariness of the troops produced, both armies went to the banks of the rivulet for water. The men approached each other fearlessly, threw down their caps and muskets, chatted to each other like old acquaintances, and exchanged their brandy-flasks and wine-skins. All asperity of feeling seemed forgotten. To a stranger they would appear more like an allied force, than men hot from a ferocious conflict, and only gathering strength and energy to recommence it anew. But a still nobler rivalry for the time existed—the interval was employed in carrying off the wounded, who lay intermixed upon the hard-contested field; and, to the honour of both be it told, each endeavoured to extricate the common sufferers, and remove their unfortunate friends and enemies without distinction. Suddenly—the bugles sounded—the drums beat to arms—many of the rival soldiery shook hands and parted with expressions of mutual esteem, and in ten minutes after they were again at the bayonet's point."

"How miserably a portion of the Spaniards behaved!"

"Yes," said O'Connor, "only for their cowardice the British would not have suffered so dreadfully as they did. But what could be expected from troops led by such miserable officers, and commanded by an imbecile old man like Cuesta? I saw him the day before the battle commenced. He was mounting his horse to look at some brigades of ours; two grenadiers lifted him bodily to the saddle, while an aide-de-camp passed his legs across the horse's croup, and an orderly fixed his foot within the stirrup? The rosary were better fitted for one of his infirmities than the baton of command. When he was with great difficulty dismounted from his charger's back, they transferred him into a lumbering coach drawn by half a score of mules, and thus he proceeded in state to his head-quarters."

"Pray did not the old boy decimate the runaways?" inquired a lieutenant.

"No—Lord Wellington interfered, and saved the greater portion of the scoundrels. The lots were drawn—officers and men prepared for immediate execution—when, at the request of the English commander, the condemned were decimated anew, and thus nine out of every ten escaped, and only five officers and thirty men suffered."

"Do you recollect the circumstances that marked the close of Talavera, O'Connor?"

"Alas! what a terrible accompaniment to the after horrors of a battle field! From the heat of the weather the fallen leaves were parched like tinder, and the grass was rank and dry. Near the end of the engagement both were ignited by the blaze of some cartridge-papers, and the whole surface of the ground was presently covered with a sheet of fire. Those of the disabled who lay on the outskirts of the field, managed to crawl away, or were carried off by their more fortunate companions who had escaped unhurt; but, unhappily, many gallant sufferers, with 'medicable wounds,' perished in the flames before it was possible to extricate them. I walked over the ground the next morning,

and, as if to exhibit violent death in all its horrifying variety, the writhed and distorted features of the blackened corpses I passed by, showed in what intolerable agony they had breathed their last!"

"And how did the battle terminate?" inquired one of the lads.

"Aubrey can best answer you," replied O'Connor; "for he was then in the 48th, and saw the last struggle the French made."

"It was a beautiful movement," said the officer to whom the major had referred. "The enemy had been repulsed and followed. The guards, carried onwards by victorious excitement, advanced too far, and found themselves in turn assailed by the French reserve, and mowed down by an overwhelming fire. They fell back; but as whole sections were swept away, their ranks became disordered, and nothing but their stubborn gallantry prevented a total *déroute*. Their situation was most critical. Had the French cavalry charged home, nothing could have saved them. Lord Wellington saw the danger, and speedily despatched support. A brigade of horse were ordered up, and our regiment moved from the height we occupied to assist our hard-pressed comrades. We came on at double quick, and formed in the rear by companies, and through the intervals in our line, the broken ranks of the guards retreated. A close and well-directed volley from us arrested the progress of the victorious French, while with amazing celerity and coolness, the guards rallied and re-formed; and in a few minutes advanced in turn to support us. As they came on, the men gave a loud huzza. An Irish regiment to the right answered it with a thrilling cheer. It was taken up from regiment to regiment, and passed along the English line; and that wild shout told the advancing enemy that British valour was indomitable. The leading files of the French halted—turned—fell back—and never made another effort. Both armies remained upon the ground; but during the night Victor decamped and left victory and an undisputed field to his conqueror."

"Gentlemen," said O'Connor, "the night wears fast,

Methinks we have had enough of martial reminiscences. Come, fill; and let us change war for a softer theme. I'll give you a toast—'Lovely woman!'—And I propose, as a suitable accompaniment, that O'Shaughnessy shall favour us with the true detail of one of his amatory adventures."

"Bravo—nothing can be more apposite to the toast"—responded Captain O'Brien. "Come, Terence, my jewel; forget your national bashfulness for half an hour, and give us the interesting particulars of the first of one of your numerous attempts at matrimony."

"Why then, faith," replied the gallant major, "my opening effort to become a Benedict was nearly as big a blunder as it well could be. Here, hand me that leathern conveniency"—and he pointed to a wine-skin, "though upon my conscience, those young scamps have lessened its contents amazingly. Heigh-ho! It was a queer business, and I will make the story as short as I can."

Major O'Shaughnessy having fortified himself with a stoup of tinta, thus commenced the affecting narrative of his first disappointment in love.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONFESSIONS OF A GENTLEMAN, WHO WOULD HAVE MARRIED
IF HE COULD.

Come, come with me, and we will make short work;
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone,
Till holy church incorporate two in one.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

DUKE. What! are you married?

MARIANA. No, my lord.

DUKE. Are you a maid?

MARIANA. No, my lord.

DUKE. A widow then?

MARIANA. Neither, my lord.

DUKE. Why, thou

Art nothing then: neither maid, widow, nor wife.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

FIRST CONFESSION.

YES—here I am, Terence O'Shaughnessy, an honest major of foot, five feet eleven and a half, and forty-one, if I only live till Michaelmas. Kicked upon the world before the down had blackened on my chin, fortune and I have been wrestling from the cradle, and yet I had little to tempt the jade's malevolence. The youngest son of an excellent gentleman, who, with an ill-paid rental of twelve hundred pounds, kept his wife in Bath, and his hounds in Tipperary, my patrimony would have scarcely purchased tools for a highwayman, when in my tenth year my father's sister sent for me to Roundwood; for hearing that I was regularly going to the devil, she had determined to redeem me if she could.

My aunt Honor was the widow of a captain of dragoons, who got his quietus in the Low Countries some years before I saw the light. His relict had in compliment to the memory of her departed lord eschewed matrimony, and like a Christian woman, devoted her few and evil days to cards and religion. She was a true specimen of an Irish dowager—her means were small, her temper short—she was stiff as a ramrod, and proud as a field-marshal. To her my education and future settlement in life were entirely confided, as one brief month deprived me of both parents. My mother died in a state of insolvency, greatly regretted by every body in Bath—to whom she was indebted; and before her disconsolate husband had time to overlook a moiety of the card claims transmitted for his liquidation, he broke his neck in attempting to leap the pound-wall of Oran-more, for a bet of a rump and dozen. Of course he was waked and buried like a gentleman—every thing sold by the creditors—my brothers sent to school—and I left to the tender mercy and sole management of the widow of Captain O'Finn.

My aunt's guardianship continued seven years, and at the expiration of that time I was weary of her thrall, and she tired of my tutelage. I was now at an age when some walk of life must be selected and pursued. For any honest avocation I had, as it was universally admitted, neither abilities nor inclination. What was to be done? and how was I to be disposed of? A short deliberation showed that there was but one path for me to follow, and I was handed over to that *refugium peccatorum*, the army, and placed as a volunteer in a regiment just raised, with a promise from the colonel that I should be promoted to the first ensigncy that became vacant.

Great was our mutual joy when Mrs. O'Finn and I were about to part company. I took an affectionate leave of all my kindred and acquaintances, and even, in the fulness of my heart, shook hands with the school-master, though in boyhood I had devoted him to the infernal gods for his wanton barbarity. But my tenderest parting was reserved for my next door neighbour, the

belle among the village beauties, and presumptive heiress to the virtues and estates of quartermaster Maginn.

Biddy Maginn was a year younger than myself; and to do her justice, a picture of health and comeliness. Lord! what an eye she had! and her leg! nothing but the gout would prevent a man from following it to the very end of Oxford-street. Biddy and I were next neighbours—our houses joined—the gardens were only separated by a low hedge—and by standing on an inverted flower-pot one could accomplish a kiss across it easily. There was no harm in the thing—it was merely for the fun of trying an experiment—and when a geranium was damaged, we left the blame upon the cats.

Although there was a visiting acquaintance between the retired quartermaster and the relic of the defunct dragoon, never had any cordiality existed between the houses. My aunt O'Finn, was as lofty in all things appertaining to her consequence, as if she had been the widow of a common-councilman; and Roger Maginn, having scraped together a good round sum, by the means quartermasters have made money since the days of Julius Cæsar, was not inclined to admit any inferiority on his part. Mrs. O'Finn could never imagine that any circumstances could remove the barrier in dignity which stood between the non-commissioned officer and the captain. While arguing on the saw, that "a living ass is better than a dead lion," Roger contended that he was as good a man as Captain O'Finn; he, Roger, being alive and merry in the town of Ballinamore, while the departed commander had been laid under a "counterpane of daisies," in some counterscarp in the Low Countries. Biddy and I laughed at the feuds of our superiors; and on the evening of a desperate blow-up, we met at sunset in the garden—agreed that the old people were fools—and resolved that nothing should interrupt our friendly relations. Of course the treaty was ratified with a kiss, for I recollect that next morning the cats were heavily censured for capsizing a box of mignonette.

No wonder then that I parted from Biddy with regret. I sat with her till we heard the quartermaster scrape

his feet at the hall-door on his return from his club—and kissing poor Biddy tenderly, as Roger entered by the front, I levanted by the back door. I fancied myself desperately in love, and was actually dreaming of my *dulcinea* when my aunt's maid called me before day, to prepare for the stage-coach that was to convey me to my regiment in Dublin.

In a few weeks an ensigncy dropped in, and I got it. Time slipped insensibly away—months became years—and three passed before I revisited Ballinamore. I heard, at stated periods, from Mrs. O'Finn. The letters were generally a detail of bad luck or bad health. For the last quarter she had never marked honours—or for the last week closed an eye with rheumatism and lumbago. Still as these *jérémiaades* covered my small allowance, they were welcome as a lover's billet. Of course, in these despatches the neighbours were duly mentioned, and every calamity occurring since her "last," was faithfully chronicled. The Maginns held a conspicuous place in my aunt's quarterly notices. Biddy had got a new gown—or Biddy had got a new piano—but since the dragoons had come to town there was no bearing her. Young Hastings was never out of the house—she hoped it would end well—but every body knew a light dragoon could have little respect for the daughter of a quartermaster; and Mrs. O'Finn ended her observations by hinting, that if Roger went seldomer to his club, and Biddy more frequently to mass, why probably in the end it would be better for both of them.

I re-entered the well-remembered street of Ballinamore late in the evening, after an absence of three years. My aunt was on a visit, and she had taken that as a convenient season for having her domicile newly painted. I halted at the inn, and after dinner strolled over the way to visit my quondam acquaintances, the Maginns.

If I had intended a surprise, my design would have been a failure. The quartermaster's establishment were on the *qui vive*. The fact was, that since the removal of the dragoons, Ballinamore had been dull as ditch-water; the arrival of a stranger in a postchaise, of

course, had created a sensation in the place, and before the driver had unharnessed, the return of Lieutenant O'Shaughnessy was regularly gazetted, and the Maginns, in anticipation of a visit, were ready to receive me.

I knocked at the door, and a servant with a beefsteak collar opened it. Had Roger mounted a livery? Ay—faith—there it was, and I began to recollect that my aunt O'Finn had omened badly from the first moment a squadron of the 13th lights had entered Ballinamore.

I found Roger in the hall. He shook my hand, swore it was an agreeable surprise, ushered me into the dining-room, and called for hot water and tumblers. We sat down. Deeply did he interest himself in all that had befallen me—deeply regret the absence of my honoured aunt—but I must not stay at the inn, I should be his guest; and to my astonishment, it was announced that the gentleman in the red collar had been already despatched to transport my luggage to the house. Excuses were idle. Roger's domicile was to be headquarters, and when I remembered my old flame, Biddy, I concluded that I might for the short time I had to stay, be in a less agreeable establishment than the honest quartermaster's.

I was mortified to hear that Biddy had been indisposed. It was a bad cold, she had not been out for a month, but she would muffle herself, and meet me in the drawing-room. This, too, was unluckily a night of great importance in the club. The new curate was to be balloted for; Roger had proposed him; and, *ergo*, Roger, as a true man, was bound to be present at the ceremony. The thing was readily arranged. We finished a second tumbler, the quartermaster betook himself to the King's Arms, and the lieutenant, meaning myself, to the drawing-room of my old innamorata.

There was a visible change in Roger's domicile. The house was newly papered; and leaving the livery aside, there was a great increase of gentility throughout the whole establishment. Instead of bounding to the presence, by three stairs at a time as I used to do in lang syne, I was ceremoniously paraded to the lady's cham-

ber by him of the beefsteak collar; and there reclining languidly on a sofa, and wrapped in a voluminous shawl, Biddy Maginn held out her hand to welcome her old confederate.

"My darling Biddy!"—"My dear Terence!"—and the usual preliminaries were got over. I looked at my old flame—she was greatly changed, and three years had wrought a marvellous alteration. I left her a sprightly girl—she was now a woman—and decidedly a very pretty one; although the rosiness of seventeen was gone, and a delicacy that almost indicated bad health had succeeded; "but," thought I, "it's all owing to the cold."

There was a guarded propriety in Biddy's bearing, that appeared almost unnatural. The warm advances of old friendship were repressed, and one who had mounted a flower-pot to kiss me across a hedge, recoiled from any exhibition of our former tenderness. Well, it was all as it should be. Then I was a boy, and now a man. Young women cannot be too particular, and Biddy Maginn rose higher in my estimation.

Biddy was stouter than she promised to be when we parted, but the eye was as dark and lustrous, and the ankle as taper, as when it last had demolished a geranium. Gradually her reserve abated—old feelings removed a constrained formality—we laughed and talked—ay—and kissed as we had done formerly; and when the old quartermaster's latch-key was heard unclosing the street-door, I found myself admitting in confidence and a whisper, that "I would marry if I could." What reply Biddy would have returned I cannot tell, for Roger summoned me to the parlour, and as her cold prevented her from venturing down, she bade me an affectionate good-night. Of course she kissed me at parting—and it was done as ardently and innocently as if the hawthorn hedge divided us.

Roger had left his companions earlier than he usually did in order to honour me his guest. The new butler paraded oysters, and down we sat *tête-à-tête*. When supper was removed and each had fabricated a red-hot tumbler from the tea-kettle, the quartermaster stretched his long legs across the hearth-rug, and with great ap-

parent solicitude inquired into all that had befallen me since I had assumed the shoulder-knot and taken to the trade of war.

"Humph!"—he observed—"two steps in three years; not bad considering there was neither money nor interest. D—n it! I often wish that Biddy was a boy. Never was such a time to purchase on. More regiments to be raised, and promotion will be at a discount. Sir Hugh Haughton married a stock-broker's widow with half a plum, and paid in the two thousand I had lent him. Zounds! if Biddy were a boy, and that money well applied, I would have her a regiment in a twelvemonth."

"Phew!" I thought to myself. "I see what the old fellow is driving at."

"There never would be such another opportunity," Roger continued. "An increased force will produce an increased difficulty in effecting it. Men will be worth their own weight in money—and d—n me, a fellow who could raise a few, might have any thing he asked for."

I remarked that, with some influence and a good round sum, recruits might still be found.

"Ay, easy enough, and not much money either, if one knew how to go about the thing. Get two or three smart chaps—let them watch fairs and patterns—mind their hits when the bumpkins got drunk, and find out when fellows were hiding from a warrant. D—n me, I would raise a hundred, while you would say Jack Robinson. Pay a friendly magistrate; attest the scoundrels before they were sober enough to cry off; bundle them to the regiment next morning; and if a rascal ran away after the commanding officer passed a receipt for him, why all the better, for you could relist him when he came home again."

I listened attentively, though in all this the cloven foot appeared. The whole was the plan of a crimp; and, if Roger was not belied, trafficking in "food for powder," had realised more of his wealth than slop-shoes and short measure.

During the developement of his project for promotion, the quartermaster and I had found it necessary

to replenish frequently, and with the third tumbler Roger came nearer to business.

"Often thought it a pity, and often said so in the club, that a fine smashing fellow like you, Terence, had not the stuff to push you on. What the devil signifies family, and blood, and all that balderdash. There's your aunt—worthy woman—but sky-high about a dead captain. D—n me—all folly. Were I a young man, I'd get hold of some girl with the wherewithal, and I would double distance half the highfliers for a colonelcy."

This was pretty significant—Roger had come to the scratch, and there was no mistaking him. We separated for the night. I dreamed, and in fancy was blessed with a wife, and honoured with a command. Nothing could be more entrancing than my visions; and when the quartermaster's *maitre d'hôtel* roused me in the morning I was engaged in a friendly argument with my beloved Biddy, as to which of his grandfathers our heir should be called after, and whether the lovely babe should be christened Roderick or Roger.

Biddy was not at breakfast; the confounded cold still confined her to her apartment; but she hoped to meet me at dinner, and I must endure her absence until then as I best could. Having engaged to return at five, I walked out to visit my former acquaintances. From all of them I received a warm welcome, and all exhibited some surprise at hearing that I was domesticated with the quartermaster. I comprehended the cause immediately. My aunt and Roger had probably a fresh quarrel; but his delicacy had prevented him from communicating it. This certainly increased my respect for the worthy man, and made me estimate his hospitality the more highly. Still there was an evident reserve touching the Maginns; and once or twice, when dragoons were mentioned, I fancied I could detect a significant look pass between the persons with whom I was conversing.

It was late when I had finished my calls; Roger had requested me to be regular to time, and five was fast approaching. I turned my steps towards his dwelling-place, when, at a corner of a street, I suddenly encountered an old schoolfellow on horseback, and great was

our mutual delight at meeting so unexpectedly. We were both hurried however, and consequently our greeting was a short one. After a few general questions and replies, we were on the point of separating, when my friend pulled up.

"But where are you hanging out?" said Frederick Maunsell. "I know your aunt is absent."

"I am at old Maginn's."

"The devil you are! Of course you heard all about Biddy and young Hastings?"

"Not a syllable. Tell it to me."

"I have no time—it's a long story; but come to breakfast, and I'll give you all the particulars in the morning. Adieu!" He struck the spurs into his horse, and cantered off singing,

"Oh! she loved a bold dragoon,
With his long sword, saddle, bridle."

I was thunderstruck. "Confound the dragoon!" thought I, "and his long sword, saddle, and bridle, into the bargain. Gad—I wish Maunsell had told me what it was. Well—what suppose I ask Biddy herself?" I had half resolved that evening to have asked her a very different question; but, faith, I determined now to make some inquiries touching Cornet Hastings of the 13th, before Miss Biddy Maginn should be invited to become Mrs. O'Shaughnessy.

My host announced that dinner was quite ready, and I found Biddy in the eating-room. She was prettily dressed as an invalid should be; and notwithstanding her cold looked remarkably handsome. I would to a dead certainty have been over head and ears in love, had not Maunsell's innuendo respecting the young dragoon operated as a damper.

Dinner proceeded as dinners always do, and Roger was bent on hospitality. I fancied that Biddy regarded me with some interest, while momentarily I felt an increasing tenderness that would have ended, I suppose, in a direct declaration, but for the monitory hint which I had received from my old schoolfellow. I was dying

to know what Maunsell's allusion pointed at, and I casually threw out a feeler.

"And you are so dull, you say? Yes, Biddy, you must miss the dragoons sadly. By the way, there was a friend of mine here. Did you know Tom Hastings?"

I never saw an elderly gentleman and his daughter more confused. Biddy blushed like a peony, and Roger seemed desperately bothered. At last the quartermaster responded,

"Fact is—as a military man, showed the cavalry some attention—constantly at the house—anxious to be civil—helped them to make out forage—but damned wild—obliged to cut, and keep them at a distance."

"Ay, Maunsell hinted something of that."

I thought Biddy would have fainted, and Roger grew red as the footman's collar.

"Pshaw! d—d gossiping chap that Maunsell. Young Hastings—infernal hemp—used to ride with Biddy. Persuaded her to get on a horse of his—ran away—threw her—confined at an inn for a week—never admitted him to my house afterwards."

Oh! here was the whole mystery unravelled! No wonder Roger was indignant, and that Biddy would redden at the recollection. It was devilish unhand-some of Mr. Hastings; and I expressed my opinion in a way that evidently pleased my host and his heiress, and showed how much I disapproved of the conduct of that *roué* the dragoon.

My fair friend rose to leave us. Her shawl caught in the chair, and I was struck with the striking change a few years had effected in my old playfellow. She was grown absolutely stout. I involuntarily noticed it.

"Lord! Biddy—how fat you are grown."

A deeper blush than even when I named that luckless dragoon, flushed to her very brows at the observation, while the quartermaster rather testily exclaimed,

"Ay—she puts on her clothes as if they were tossed on with a pitchfork, since she got this cold. D—n it,

Biddy, I say, tighten yourself, woman ! Tighten yourself, or I won't be plased !"

Well, here was a load of anxiety removed, and Maunsell's mischievous innuendo satisfactorily explained away. Biddy was right in resenting the carelessness that exposed her to ridicule and danger ; and it was a proper feeling in the old quartermaster, to cut the man who would mount his heiress on a break-neck horse. Gradually we resumed the conversation of last night—there was the regiment if I chose to have it—and when Roger departed for the club, I made up my mind, while ascending the stairs, to make a splice with Biddy, and become Colonel O'Shaughnessy.

Thus determined, I need not particularize what passed upon the sofa. My wooing was short, sharp, and decisive ; and no affected delicacy restrained Biddy from confessing that the flame was mutual. My fears had been moonshine ; my suspicions groundless. Biddy had not valued the dragoon a brass button ; and—poor soul—she hid her head upon my shoulder, and, in a soft whisper, acknowledged that she never had cared a *trancee** for any body in the wide world but myself!

It was a moment of exquisite delight. I told her of my prospects, and mentioned the quartermaster's conversation. Biddy listened with deep attention. She blushed—strove to speak—stopped—was embarrassed. I pressed her to be courageous ; and at last she deposited her head upon my breast, and bashfully hinted that Roger was old—avarice was the vice of age—he was fond of money—he was hoarding it certainly for her ; but still, it would be better that my promotion should be secured. Roger had now the cash in his own possession. If we were married without delay, it would be transferred at once ; whereas, something that might appear to him advantageous might offer, and induce her father to invest it. But she was really shocked at herself—such a proposition would appear so indelicate ; but still a husband's interests were too dear to be sacrificed to maiden timidity.

* *Anglice*, a jackstraw.

I never estimated Biddy's worth till now. She united the foresight of a sage, with the devotion of a woman. I would have been insensible, indeed, had I not testified my regard and admiration; and Biddy was still resting on my shoulder, when the quartermaster's latch-key announced his return from the club.

After supper I apprised Roger of my passion for his daughter, and modestly admitted that I had found favour in her sight. He heard my communication, and frankly confessed that I was a son-in-law he most approved of. Emboldened by the favourable reception of my suit, I ventured to hint at an early day, and pleaded "a short leave between returns," for precipitancy. The quartermaster met me like a man.

"When people wished to marry, why, delay was balderdash. Matters could be quickly and quietly managed. His money was ready—no bonds or post obits—a clean thousand in hand, and another the moment an opening to purchase a step should occur. No use in mincing matters among friends. Mrs. O'Finn was an excellent woman. She was a true friend, and a good Catholic; but d—n it she had old-world notions about family, and in pride the devil was a fool to her. If she came home before the ceremony, there would be an endless fuss—and Roger concluded by suggesting that we should be married the next evening, and give my honoured aunt an agreeable surprise."

That was precisely what I wanted; and a happier man never pressed a pillow than I, after my interesting colloquy with the quartermaster.

The last morning of my celibacy dawned. I met Roger only at the breakfast table; for my beloved Biddy, between cold and virgin trepidation, was *hors de combat*, and signified in a tender billet her intention to keep her chamber until the happy hour arrived that should unite us in the silken bonds of hymen. The quartermaster undertook to conduct the nuptial preparations; a friend of his would perform the ceremony and the quieter the thing was done the better. After breakfast he set out to complete all matrimonial arrangements; and I strolled into the garden to ruminate

on my approaching happiness, and bless Heaven for the treasure I was destined to possess in Biddy Maginn.

No place could have been more appropriately selected for tender meditation. *There was* the conscious hedge, that had witnessed the first kiss of love; ay, and for aught I knew to the contrary, the identical flower-pot on which her sylphic form had rested; sylphic it was no longer, for the slender girl had ripened into a stout and comely gentlewoman; and she would be mine—mine that very evening.

"Ah! Terence," I said in an under tone, "Few men at twenty-one have drawn such a prize. A thousand pounds ready cash—a regiment in perspective—a wife in hand; and such a wife—young, artless, tender, and attached. By every thing matrimonial, you have the luck of thousands!"

My soliloquy was interrupted by a noise on the other side of the fence. I looked over. It was my aunt's maid; and great was our mutual astonishment! Judy blessed herself, as she ejaculated—

"Holy Virgin! Master Terence, is that you?"

I satisfied her of my identity, and learned to my unspeakable surprise that my aunt had returned unexpectedly, and that she had not the remotest suspicion that her affectionate nephew, myself, was cantoned within pistol-shot. Without consideration I hopped over the hedge, and next minute was in the presence of my honoured protectress, the relict of the departed captain.

"Blessed angels!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Finn, as she took me to her arms, and favoured me with a kiss, in which there was more blackguard* than ambrosia.—"Arrah! Terence, jewel; what the devil drove ye here! Lord pardon me for mentioning him!"

"My duty, dear aunt. I am but a week landed from Jersey, and could not get rest till I got leave from the colonel to run down between returns, and pay you a hurried visit. Lord! How well you look!"

"Ah! then, Terence, jewel, it's hard for me to look well, considering the way I have been fretted by the

*Coarse Irish snuff.

tenants, and afflicted with the lumbago. Dennis Clark—may the widow's curse follow him wherever he goes!—bundled off to America with a neighbour's wife, and a year and a half's rent along with her, the thief! And then, since Holland tide, I have not had a day's health."

"Well, from your looks, I should never have supposed it. But you were visiting at Meldrum Castle?"

"Yes, faith, and a dear visit it was. Nothing but half-crown whist, and unlimited brag. Lost seventeen points last Saturday night. It was Sunday morning, Christ pardon us for playing! But what was that to my luck yesterday evening. Bragged twice for large pools, with red nines and black knaves; and Mrs. Cooney, both times showed natural aces! If ever woman sold herself, she has. The Lord stand between us and evil! Well, Terence, you'll be expecting your quarter's allowance. We'll make it out somehow—Heigh-ho! Between bad cards, and runaway tenants, I can't attend to my soul as I ought, and Holy Week coming!"

I expressed due sympathy for her losses, and regretted that her health, bodily and spiritual, was so indifferent.

"I have no good news for you, Terence," continued Mrs. O'Finn. "Your brother Arthur is following your poor father's example, and ruining himself with hounds and horses. He's a weak and wilful man, and nothing can save him, I fear. Though he never treated me with proper respect, I strove to patch up a match between him and Miss Mac Teggart. Five thousand down upon the nail, and three hundred a-year failing her mother. I asked her here on a visit, and though he had ridden past without calling on me, wrote him my plan, and invited him to meet her. What do you think, Terence, was his reply? Why, that Miss Mac Teggart might go to Bath, for he would have no call to my swivel-eyed customers. There was a return for my kindness; as if a woman of five thousand *down*, and three hundred a-year in expectation, was required to look straight. Ah! Terence, I wish you had been here. She went to Dublin, and was picked up in a fortnight."

Egad! here was an excellent opportunity to broach

my own success. There could be no harm in making the commander's widow a confidante; and after all, she had a claim upon me as my early protectress.

"My dear aunt, I cannot be surprised at your indignation. Arthur was a fool, and lost an opportunity that never may occur again. In fact, my dear madam, I intended to have given you an agreeable surprise.—I—I—I—am on—the very brink of matrimony!"

"Holy Bridget!" exclaimed Mrs. O'Finn, as she crossed herself devoutly.

"Yes, ma'am. I am engaged to a lady with two thousand pounds."

"Is it *ready*, Terence?" said my aunt.

"Down on the table, before the priest puts on his vestment."

"Arrah—my blessing attend ye, Terence. I knew you would come to good."

"Is she young?"

"Just twenty."

"Is she good-looking?"

"More than that; extremely pretty, innocent and artless."

"Arrah—give me another kiss, for I'm proud of ye;" and Captain O'Finn's representative clasped me in her arms.

"But the family, Terence; remember the old stock. Is she one of us?"

"She is highly respectable. An only daughter, with excellent expectations."

"What is her father, Terence?"

"A soldier, ma'am."

"Lord—quite enough. He's by profession a gentleman; and we can't expect to find every day descendants from the kings of Connaught, like the O'Shaughnessies and the O'Finns. But when is it to take place, Terence?"

"Why, faith, ma'am, it was a bit of a secret; but I can keep nothing from you."

"And why should ye. Haven't I been to you more than a mother, Terence?"

"I am to be married this evening?"

"This evening! Holy Saint Patrick! and you're sure of the money. It's not a rent-charge—nothing of bills or bonds?"

"Nothing but bank notes; nothing but the *aragudh-sheese*." *

"Ogh! my blessing be about ye night and day. Arrah, Terence, what's her name?"

"You'll not mention it. We want the thing done quietly."

"Augh, Terence; and do you think I would let any thing ye told me slip? By this cross,"—and Mrs. O'Finn bisected the forefinger of her left hand with the corresponding digit of the right one; "the face of clay shall never be the wiser of any thing ye mention!"

After this desperate adjuration there was no refusing my aunt's request.

"You know her well,"—and I looked extremely cunning.

"Do I, Terence? Let me see—I have it. It's Ellen Robinson. No—though her money's safe, there's but five hundred ready."

"Guess again, aunt."

"Is it Bessie Lloyd? No—though the old miller is rich as a Jew, he would not part a guinea to save the whole human race, or make his daughter a duchess."

"Far from the mark as ever, aunt."

"Well," returned Mrs. O'Finn, with a sigh, "I'm fairly puzzled."

"Whisper!" and I playfully took her hand, and put my lips close to her cheek. "Its—"

"Who?—who, for the sake of heaven?"

"Biddy Maginn!"

"Oh, Jasus!" ejaculated the captain's relict, as she sank upon a chair. "I'm murdered! Give me my salts, there. Terence O'Shaughnessy, don't touch me. I put the cross between us,"—and she made a crumpled flourish with her hand. "You have finished me, ye villain. Holy Virgin! what sins have I committed, that I should be disgraced in my old age! Meat never crosses

* *Anglice*, cash down.

my lips of a Friday; I was regular at mass, and never missed confession: and, when the company were honest, played as fair as every body else. I wish I was at peace with poor dear Pat. O'Finn. Oh! murder! murder!"

I stared in amazement. If Roger Maginn had been a highwayman, his daughter could not have been an object of greater horror to Mrs. O'Finn. At last I mustered words to attempt to reason with her, but to my desultory appeals she returned abuse fit only for a pick-pocket to receive.

"Hear me, madam."

"Oh, you common *ommadawn*!"*

"For heaven's sake, listen."

"Oh! that the O'Finns and the O'Shaughnessys should be disgraced by a mean-spirited *gommoige*† of your kind!"

"You won't hear me."

"Biddy Maginn!" she exclaimed. "Why bad as my poor brother, your father, was, and though he too married a devil that helped to ruin him, she was at all events a lady in her own right, and cousin-german to Lord Lowes-toffe. But—you—you unfortunate disciple."

I began to wax warm, for my aunt complimented me with all the abuse she could muster, and there never was a cessation but when her breath failed.

"Why, what have I done? what am I about doing?" I demanded.

"Just going," returned Mrs. O'Finn, "to make a Judy Fitzsimmon's mother of yourself."

"And is it," said I, "because Miss Maginn can't count her pedigree from Fin Macoul, that she should not discharge the duties of a wife?"

My aunt broke in upon me.

"There's one thing certain, that she'll discharge the duties of a mother. Heavens! if you had married a girl with only a *blast*,‡ your connexions might brazen it out. But a woman in such a barefaced condition—as if her

* Anglice, a fool. † A simpleton.

‡ Anglice, a flaw of the reputation.

staying in the house these three months, could blind the neighbours, and close their mouths."


"Well, in the devil's name, will you say what objection exists to Biddy Maginn making me a husband to night?"

"And a papa in three months afterwards!" rejoined my loving aunt.

If a shell burst in the bivouac, I could not have been more electrified. Dark suspicions flashed across my mind—a host of circumstances confirmed my doubts—and I implored the widow of the defunct dragoon to tell me all she knew.

It was a simple, although, as far as I was concerned, not a flattering narrative. Biddy had commenced an equestrian novitiate under the tutelage of Lieutenant Hastings. Her progress in the art of horsemanship was no doubt very satisfactory, and the pupil and the professor frequently rode out *tête-à-tête*. Biddy, poor soul, was fearful of exhibiting any *mal-adresse*, and of course, roads less frequented than the king's highway were generally chosen for her riding lessons. Gradually these excursions became more extensive; twilight, and in summer too, often fell, before the quartermaster's heiress had returned; and on one unfortunate occasion she was absent for a week. This caused a desperate commotion in the town; the dowagers and old maids sat in judgment on the case, and declared Biddy no longer visitable. In vain her absence was ascribed to accident—a horse had run away—she was thrown—her ankle sprained—and she was detained unavoidably at a country inn until the injury was abated.

In this state of things the dragoons were ordered off; and it was whispered that there had been a desperate blow-up between the young lady's preceptor the lieutenant, and her papa the quartermaster. Once only had Biddy ventured out upon the mall; but she was cut dead by her quondam acquaintances. From that day she seldom appeared abroad; and when she did, it was always in the evening, and even then closely muffled up. No wonder scandal was rife touching the causes of her seclusion. A few charitably ascribed it to bad health—



others to disappointment—but the greater proportion of the fair sex attributed her confinement to the true cause, and whispered that Miss Maginn was “as ladies wished to be, who love their lords.”

Here was a solution of the mystery! It was now pretty easy to comprehend why Biddy was, swathed like a mummy, and Roger so ready with his cash. No wonder the *demoiselle* was anxious to abridge delay, and the old crimp so obliging in procuring a priest and preparing all requisite matters for immediate hymeneals. What was to be done? What, but denounce the frail fair one, and annihilate that villain, her father. Without a word of explanation I caught up my hat—and left the house in a hurry, and Mrs. O’Finn in a state of nervousness that threatened to become hysterical.

When I reached the quartermaster’s habitation, I hastened to my own apartment and got my traps together in double quick. I intended to have abdicated quietly, and favoured the intended Mrs. O’Shaughnessy with an epistle communicating the reasons that induced me to decline the honour of her hand; but on the landing my worthy father-in-law cut off my retreat; and a parting *tête-à-tête* became unavoidable. He appeared in great spirits at the success of his interview with the parson.

“Well, Terence, I have done the business. The old chap made a parcel of objections; but he’s poor as Lazarus,—slily slipped him ten pounds, and that quieted his scruples. He’s ready at a moment’s warning.”

“He’s a useful person,” I replied drily; “and all you want is a son-in-law.”

“A what?” exclaimed the father of Miss Biddy.

“A son-in-law!”

“Why what the devil do you mean?”

“Not a jot more or less than what I say. You have procured the priest, but I suspect the bridegroom will not be forthcoming.”

“Zounds, sir! do you mean to treat my daughter with disrespect?”

“Upon consideration, it would be hardly fair, to deprive my old friend Hastings of his pupil. Why, with

another week's private tuition, Biddy might offer her services to Astley."

"Sir,—if you mean to be impertinent,"—and Roger began to bluster, while the noise brought the footman to the hall, and Miss Biddy to the banisters "shawled to the nose." I began to lose temper.

"Why, you infernal old crimp!"

"You audacious young scoundrel!"

"Oh, Jasus! gentlemen! Pace for the sake of the blessed mother!" cried the butler from below.

"Father, jewel. Terence, my only love!" screamed Miss Biddy over the staircase.—"What is the matter!"

"He wants to be off," roared the quartermaster.

"Stop, Terence, or you'll have my life to answer for."

"Lord, Biddy, how fat you are grown!"

"You shall fulfil your promise," cried Roger, "or I'll write to the Horse Guards, and memorial the commander-in-chief."

"You may memorial your best friend, the devil, you old crimp,"—and I forced my way to the hall.

"Come back, you deceiver!" exclaimed Miss Maginn.

"Arrah, Biddy, go tighten yourself," said I.

"Oh! I'm fainting!" screamed Roger's heiress.

"Don't let him out!" roared her sire.

The gentleman with the beefsteak collar made a demonstration to interrupt my retreat, and in return received a box on the ear that sent him half way down the kitchen stairs.

"There," I said, "give that to the old rogue, your master, with my best compliments"—and bounding from the hall door, Biddy Maginn, like Lord Ullin's daughter, "was left lamenting!"

Well, there is no describing the *rookawn** a blow up like this occasioned in a country town. I was unmercifully quizzed; but the quartermaster and his heiress found it advisable to abdicate. Roger removed his household goods to the metropolis—Miss Biddy favour-

* *Anglice*, confusion.

ed him in due time with a grandson; and when I returned from South America, I learned that "this lost love of mine" had accompanied a Welsh lieutenant to the hymeneal altar, who not being "over particular" about trifles, had obtained on the same morning a wife, an heir, and an estate—with Roger's blessing into the bargain.

"Why, what a fool you were Terence"—said O'Connor, "had you but taken fortune at the flood, and made Miss Biddy Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, what between cash and crimping, you might have been now commanding a brigade."

"Ay—when you know how I failed twice afterwards, you will admit that I have been an unlucky suitor."

"What, two efforts more—and still doomed to single blessedness?"

"True enough;—in our next bivouac I'll give you the particulars. 'Tis late,—to roost, boys! That hill was so infernally steep, that a man might as well escalate a windmill—nobody but the devil or Dick Magennis could climb it without distress."

Wearied by the day's exertions, none of the party objected to the gallant Major's proposition. Quickly their simple resting-places were arranged—and as quickly they were occupied. The light cavalry had long since detached their pickets—and every necessary precaution had been taken to guard against surprise. The hum from the distant bivouacs became fainter—the fires sparkled more brightly in the gloom—group after group betook themselves to sleep—the tattoo echoed through the hills—"while the deep war-drum's sound announced the close of day."



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